Performance in Greek and Roman Theatre

Edited by
GEORGE W.M. HARRISON
& VAYOS LIAPIS

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Performance in Greek and Roman Theatre

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ABBREVIATIONS

All abbreviations follow *L'Année Philologique*, to which are added:

ANRW *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* (Berlin and New York 1972–)
ARV^2 Beazley, *Attic Red-figure Vase Painters*, Oxford 1963.
BAD *Beazley Archive Database*, http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk.pottery.
CIL *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum.*
LCL Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass.
LIMC *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, vols. 1–8. Zurich 1981–1997.
LSJ H.G. Liddell, R. Scott and H.S. Jones (eds.), *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford 1940^9) with Revised Supplement by P.G.W. Glare and A.A. Thompson (Oxford 1996).
OLD Glare (ed.), *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Oxford 1982.
PG Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus, series Graeca.*
PL Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus, series Latina.*

INTRODUCTION

MAKING SENSE OF ANCIENT PERFORMANCE

Vayos Liapis, Costas Panayotakis, and George W.M. Harrison[1]

It is notoriously difficult to define "performance", and it is with some hesitation that the decision was made to adopt the term in this volume's title. Indeed, it has been argued that, far from being susceptible of a satisfactory definition, performance is an intrinsically contested concept: continuing debate and constructive disagreement are inherent in its very nature, thereby necessitating the use of different and often competing conceptual frameworks.[2] For the purposes of this volume, "performance" is to be understood as including all non-verbal means used to establish or promote theatrical representation and the concomitant production of meaning. As such, "performance" refers not only to acting or stage business, but also to what Aristotle broadly described as *opsis* (ὄψις),[3] namely all non-verbal constituents of ancient theatre: these include (but are not limited to) masks, costumes, props, scenography, song and music, theatrical space and the use made of it, and physical surroundings (not just the performance spaces themselves but also such features of the surrounding topography as could be meaningfully exploited by the playwrights). A number of additional elements also come under this category: gesture, stage-directions (explicit or implicit in the script), attribution of speaking parts, rehearsals—and even modern or contemporary attitudes and approaches to the staging of Greek and Roman theatre.

For a long time, Aristotle's presumed dismissal of *opsis* in his *Poetics* made it all too easy for text-centred scholarship to overlook the physical dimensions that bring the words to life and condition audience reception of the spectacle. This view, however, is forcefully contested by G.M. Sifakis in

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[1] Section I of the Introduction was written by Vayos Liapis; section III by Vayos Liapis and George W.M. Harrison; the editors invited Costas Panayotakis to contribute section II of the Introduction, and are extremely grateful for his participation.

[2] For performance as an "essentially contested concept" see Strine, Long and Hopkins (1990) 183; cf. Carlson (2004) 1. The latter also offers throughout his book a broad overview of recent manifestations and categorizations of performance in both theory and practice.

[3] For a discussion of Aristotle's use of ὄψις see Sifakis, this volume.

this volume, in a paper that follows in the wake of his earlier publications;[4] a similar view is taken by Konstan in his own chapter in this volume. Moreover, thanks to thorough, original and often ground-breaking scholarly research during the last five decades,[5] scholars have begun aggressively to expand their interpretative horizons to explore the impact of the performative aspect on the ways in which plays are constructed and appreciated. More recently, classicists have turned to theoretical issues related to performance (e.g. performance analysis, or semiotics of performance). A prime example of this kind of approach is Revermann (2006a), an erudite and theoretically sophisticated study of Aristophanic dramaturgy (and often of Greek drama in general), which seeks to assign configurations and taxonomies of meaning to specific theatrical codes and practices, as far as these can be reconstructed from the dramatic scripts or from material evidence.

Playwrights, directors and actors know that re-animating the theatrical text for performance is a fascinating experience fraught with creative pitfalls and possibilities. Scholars who set themselves the difficult task of reconstructing ancient performances surely experience the same frustration and exhilaration. They additionally must face the further challenge of piecing together evidence for performance that is all too often fragmentary, unclear, ambiguous, and sometimes even contradictory, even though it sometimes allows precious glimpses into attitudes to the classical repertoire. This volume is devoted to using historical and archaeological, as well as textual, insights to reconstruct as closely as possible the conditions of ancient performance. It also invites reflection on the methodological problems of reconstructing the original physical conditions of the performance of ancient plays. Moreover, it addresses issues of performance history, both in antiquity and in modern times.

I. *Ancient Greek Theatre and Performance Criticism*

Performance Space and Its Uses

Emphasis on the performative aspects of ancient (predominantly Greek) theatre was a development of the 1960s, pioneered by (rather appropriately)

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4 Sifakis (2001), esp. 10–11, and (2002), the latter reprinted in translation in Sifakis (2007) 117–146; cf. also idem (2004) and (2009).

5 Cf. in particular Arnott (1962); Hourmouziades (1965), Taplin (1977b); Wiles (1997) and (2007); also, the contributions in Goldhill and Osborne (1999) and in Easterling and Hall (2002).

one Italian and one Greek scholar. Russo 1962—of which Russo 1994 is a revised and expanded English version—was the first to urge, in a comprehensive study, a performance-oriented approach of Greek drama, in particular of Aristophanes. Although not entirely immune to anachronism, Russo earnestly endeavoured to move away from earlier a-historical approaches to ancient performance towards more sophisticated readings, which sought to take proper account of the historical context and the material conditions of Aristophanic performance. Despite a few idiosyncratic views,[6] Russo had a sharp eye for the mechanics of ancient performance, and a keen sense of the complexities involved in the transition from script to performance.

A few years later, Hourmouziades (1965) focused on the antithesis between what is visible at the level of production in Euripidean theatre and what is left to the audience's visual imagination to construct. His sensitive suggestions on a variety of issues, though immediately relevant to Euripidean tragedy, often have larger implications for such questions as the function of the *skēnē*-building, the sparseness of the stage décor, the existence or not of a low stage, the use of the *ekkyklēma*, etc. In many respects, Hourmouziades' book shares a number of assumptions with Arnott (1962), and the two scholars seem to have reached similar conclusions regarding, e.g., the notion that the stage action took place before an essentially unchangeable background, or that fifth-century actors performed on a slightly elevated stage. Furthermore, Arnott was a great believer in the power of the word, which in his view could transform a sparse and neutral scenery into whatever the action of the play required, without the playwright having to resort to illusionism.

The following decade saw the publication of Oliver Taplin's epoch-making *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (1977), which redefined the categories through which Greek tragedy had usually been viewed.[7] Among many other things, Taplin argued that the traditional structural divisions (episode, stasimon etc.), although purportedly going back to Aristotle (*Poetics* 1452b17–27), prove problematic when applied to fifth-century tragedy—to say nothing of the fact that the relevant chapter of the *Poetics* may well be an interpolation.[8] For Taplin, it is the exits and entrances of actors around "act"-dividing choral songs that really function as structuring devices. Taplin's analysis

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6 Such as the highly contestable idea that there was a special "Lenaean" theatre for plays presented at the Lenaea festival; see the criticisms offered by Segal (1965).

7 Some of Taplin's important conclusions had already been set forth in Taplin (1971) and (1972).

8 Taplin (1977b) 49–60, 470–476.

of the structural divisions of tragedy has been challenged by Poe (1992) and (1993), but the blow it has dealt the "Aristotelian" categorization is hard to ignore. Taplin also argued that the *skēnē*-building and its central door first became significant theatrical constituents in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, though this particular thesis did not meet with universal approval.[9] Another important thesis proposed in Taplin's book was that any significant stage action can and must be indicated in or deduced from the script; in other words, no stage business is to be assumed unless there is implicit or explicit textual evidence for it. As a result, the "extravagant spectacle and crowds of supernumeraries"[10] sometimes imagined into the production by earlier scholars no longer have a place in the serious analysis of Greek tragic theatre. All in all, Taplin's book urged (and largely achieved) a permanent shift from the largely philological approaches to Greek tragedy that were characteristic of earlier scholarship to a much more nuanced and inclusive type of analysis focusing on the plays as works meant for and perceived through performance. Aristotle's timeless advice, to the effect that playwrights in composing their works ought never to lose sight of the stage business—"setting [the play's action] as far as possible before [their] eyes ... as if they were themselves present [at the action]" (*Poetics* 1455a24–25)—remains indispensable also for critics of Greek tragedy.[11]

At about the same time (and the chronological coincidence was no doubt symptomatic of a paradigm shift in the study of Greek drama), there appeared a number of publications focusing on the type of problems Taplin (1977b) was raising. For example, Hamilton (1978) attempted a taxonomy and interpretation of the various ways in which entering characters in Greek tragedy are announced, or not announced. In an ambitious study, Mastronarde (1979) explored instances in which the expected continuity between speech (or rather speech acts) and consequent response seems to be disrupted, as when questions seem to be ignored, or orders to remain unexecuted.[12] The basic question Mastronarde asked is essentially the same as the one underlying Taplin's almost contemporaneous book: "can we ever believe that a truly significant gesture or movement took place which is

9 Cf. e.g. Bain (1979a) 172.

10 Quotation from Diggle (1979) 207.

11 Taplin's interpretations of Greek tragedy *qua* stage action have also been laid out in more accessible format (and with many new insights) in Taplin (1978); cf. also Taplin (1983) and (1987a) for more specific applications of his general approach.

12 A digital version of this important work is freely available online since 2008: see http://escholarship.org/uc/item/21k0q422. For a thoughtful review and critique see Rabinowitz (1982).

not verbally marked in our texts?”[13] Although focusing mainly on formal conventions of rhetoric, especially dialogue and rhetorical questions, where he usefully applied concepts from linguistics, Mastronarde duly took account of those aspects of performance, such as exits and entrances or the physical arrangement of actors on stage, that affect or determine the characters’ awareness of their surroundings or of other characters, or the simple “logical progression in the give-and-take of dialogue”.[14] A few years later, Bain (1981) investigated one particular aspect of the “grammar of dramatic technique”[15] explored by Mastronarde, namely instances in which orders are given by superiors to subordinate *personae mutae*, and argued for the assumption that such orders were immediately executed, even though this may not always be apparent from the script.

A number of studies came in Taplin’s wake. Seale (1982) attempted to link aspects of staging and production with dominant visual patterns in Sophocles’ plays, especially insofar as a play’s *opsis* may sometimes reflect, on the visual level, disparities in knowledge that are essential to its thematic concerns. Halleran (1985) focused on exits, entrances and the concomitant announcements (or lack thereof) in Euripides. His discussion includes (pp. 34–40) a useful and interesting section on “surprise entrances”, i.e. entrances that ought to be announced (because occurring not directly after strophic songs) but are not. He also explored connections and parallelisms (including visual ones) between lyric songs and the surrounding entrances or exits of actors. Finally, Frost (1988) offered a survey of exits and entrances in Menander, an analysis of their management and motivation, as well as a brief discussion of some general conventions.

Parallel to these studies, which largely followed Taplin’s methodologies, there developed, towards the late 1980s, a critical discourse problematizing, from different viewpoints, some of Taplin’s underlying or explicit tenets. Thus, while principally attacking Goldhill (1986) for privileging the (theatrical) text over performance, Wiles (1987) included remarks critical of Taplin too, e.g., by criticizing his lack of interest in the intertextuality of Greek drama or in the specific historical or cultural context in which Greek drama was produced. Nonetheless, Wiles affirmed the essential value of Taplin’s approach in clarifying “scenic devices used by the dramatist, building blocks no less

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13 Mastronarde (1979) 2.

14 Quotation from Mastronarde (1979) 3.

15 The term was coined by Fraenkel (1950) ii.305: “for Greek tragedy there exists also something like a grammar of dramatic technique.”

basic than linguistic devices such as metre and metaphor".[16] In his response, Goldhill (1989) argued that performance criticism, for all its undeniable merit, is quite inadequate as a means of understanding ancient theatre, unless it is firmly anchored in an awareness of the cultural parameters—the symbolisms, the mentalities, the assumptions, the ideologies—that provided a context for and qualified the experience of ancient performance. To explore dramatic technique, Goldhill insisted, is to engage with large issues of interpretation; there can be no such thing as an interpretation-free or culturally unbiased approach to performance. Moreover, Goldhill postulated, there is no real divide between text and performance: from a post-structuralist point of view, performance *is* a text, a set of semiotic and narrative elements whose meanings are constructed by an expectant audience sharing specific communication codes and conventions.

Performance and Its Agents: Actors, Masks, Chorus

Since tragedies and, with some exceptions, comedies were performed by up to three actors (though all of Aeschylus' extant plays except the *Oresteia* only require two), producers inevitably resorted to "doubling", whereby actors were required to perform more than one speaking part in any given play. In a relatively recent dissertation, A.R. Cohen (1999) discussed the possible ways in which the three major Greek tragedians exploited "doubling" for special effect—for instance, by capitalizing on the audience's being able to identify actors playing different roles, especially by recognizing their voices. That actors' voices were recognizable, and could be put to dramatic effect, had already been argued by Pavlovskis (1977), although as pointed out by N.W. Slater (1991) 201 n. 9 Pavlovskis had actually been preceded by Hermann (1840) 32–35. To take but one striking example, in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* the same actor played the roles of Odysseus, the False Merchant, and Heracles. An audience attuned to actors' voices would have perceived the appropriateness of having both Odysseus and his instrument, the "Merchant", played by the same actor; they would also have felt the poignant irony of the same actor playing Heracles, who (though in a different way from Odysseus) furthers the accomplishment of Philoctetes' destiny against the hero's own original wishes.

The precise mechanics of the three-actor rule have been the object of some debate. A central question here is whether three actors represent an

[16] Quotation from Wiles (1987) 143. For another attack on Goldhill, and on deconstruction, from the point of view of speech-act theory see Clark and Csapo (1991).

absolute maximum in all surviving tragedies, or whether there are possible exceptions. To take a much-cited example, in *Oedipus at Colonus* envisaging a fourth actor would obviate the need to role-split by assigning the role of Theseus to all three actors in turn.[17] In the fourth-century *Rhesus*, is it meaningful to have the part of Alexander played by a fourth actor, or is the actor playing Odysseus to perform a lightning-quick change of costume (see further Liapis, this volume)? And what about Aristophanic comedy? Is some laxity acceptable there, so that a maximum of four actors may be employed, as MacDowell (1994) argued? Or can most Aristophanic comedies (with the exception of *Lysistrata*) be performed by only three actors, on the assumption that these actors were able and willing to perform demanding tasks, such as ventriloquism or lightning changes of costume and mask, as Marshall (1997) maintains? The problem is addressed once again by Marshall in this volume, with *Birds* as a case study and with interesting speculation on the possible theatrical effects achieved by Aristophanes in that play.

Considerable work remains to be done in this field. To establish that the three-actor rule obtained in all or in most cases, and to describe its mechanics is not sufficient. There are central questions that need to be addressed with regard to the operation of this rule, some of which have been admirably formulated by N.W. Slater (1991) 197–198. For instance, how did such a "rule" (assuming it was one) arise? Was it out of financial considerations (fewer actors meant less pressing demands on the city's finances)? In this case, why were generous *khorēgoi* not allowed, if they so wished, to foot the bill for the occasional fourth actor? Alternatively, it is sometimes assumed that the three-actor rule was meant to ensure that all playwrights entered the contest on an equal footing. In that case, however, it would be hard to explain either the apparent disparity between the three-actor limit obtaining for tragedy and the four-actor limit for comedy, or the seemingly crushing demands a rigid three-actor rule would place on actors, especially in terms of ultra-rapid changes of costume and mask, which would unreasonably increase the likelihood of accident or error. Another possibility, suggested by N.W. Slater (*l.c.*), is that the existence of an export market for the theatre may have exerted a pressure on poets to write plays for a uniform production standard—although one might expect that there were considerable local differences in terms of funds or trained actors available, which would have arguably made the application of a "uniform production standard" a non-starter.

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17 In favour of role-splitting in Greek tragedy see e.g. Sifakis (1995) 19–21; in the *Coloneus*: Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 142–144; McCart (2007) 255–257.

All in all, it seems we are still a long way from explaining the circumstances that may have necessitated the three-actor "rule". One way to go about it, it seems, is to consider whether the presumed rule has more to do with performance effectiveness than with competition regulations or logistics. In the large space of the Theatre of Dionysus, one might argue, it would have been especially difficult to convey to the audience a clear sense of who was speaking at what time, especially given the additional restrictions imposed by the mask. Admittedly, gesture and body language would have been crucial in helping the audience identify which actor was speaking at any given moment. Still, it is surely no accident that even when three persons are onstage, there is scarcely ever a genuine three-way dialogue: on the contrary, dialogue is conducted between pairs of speakers (A and B, then A and C, and so on). One imagines that it would not always be easy for spectators, especially those sitting in the upper rows, to make out who was talking to whom on stage, even when only three actors were present. If this is a valid point, then it would surely have been pointless to increase production costs by bringing more than three actors on the stage simultaneously.

Masks, especially those of Greek New Comedy and Roman Comedy, have rightly been interpreted as semiotic agents, conveying sets of signs that are part of a wider process of theatrical signification.[18] In a series of influential papers,[19] W.T. MacCary argued that certain types of New Comedy masks were assigned to particular characters, thereby conveying essential information about their identity and role, their attributes and typical modes of behaviour. Thus, New Comedy's highly typified masks made characters both recognizable and predictable. Responding to MacCary's analysis, Brown (1987) argued, on the contrary, that, at least in the case of Menander, masks conveyed only such basic information as age, sex and status.[20] This would no doubt have made some stock characters immediately recognizable; however, personality traits or behavioural patterns would have been established in the course of

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18 For a refreshingly introductory essay on masks in the ancient theatre see Marshall (1999), who also puts forth some challenging propositions regarding the function of the ancient theatre mask (e.g. that it was simple and unindividuated ["minimalistic"], or that its effect was not an alienating one).

19 MacCary (1969), (1970), (1971) and (1972).

20 See also, on this point, Marshall (1999) 190–191 for the six basic mask types (Old Man, Mature Man, Young Man; Old Woman, Mature Woman, Young Woman). Marshall denies that status or rank was conveyed by the mask, and argues that "above all else, clear visual communication over distance seems to be the principal benefit of fifth-century mask-wearing" (191).

the play, by the words and actions assigned to each particular character. To date, the fullest treatment of the New Comedy mask as "the privileged 'master sign' of New Comedy's signification system in performance" is Wiles (1991).[21] Using a wealth of comparative material spanning several cultures and ages, as well as a spectrum of theoretical insights (mainly from structuralism), Wiles explores the ways in which masks crucially contribute to a nexus of "semiotized" information, organized in sign-systems.[22]

For modern audiences, the mask can be an alienating, even disturbing device, but Wiles (2007), in a work hailed as "one of the most important books on Greek drama to appear in the last twenty years",[23] has argued that masks in Greek drama were sacred objects, literally effecting the transformation of their wearers into the mythical persons enacted onstage. For Wiles, Greek drama was primarily a religious experience, and the mask was instrumental in instantiating the presence of gods and heroes in the context of Dionysiac drama; one senses here the influence of Schechner's (1988) emphasis on the affinities between performance and ritual as effective actions. Wiles' book also covers a very large range of mask-related topics, from the manufacturing of masks in antiquity to modern theatre practitioners' use of and experimentation with masks,[24] and provides valuable insights into the implications of the mask for the performers' use both of their bodies and of their voices.

The chorus is at once the most emblematic part of Greek drama and the element that causes the greatest perplexity to modern theatre practitioners staging Greek plays.[25] This is at least partly due to the chorus being regarded, implicitly or not, as somehow distinct from the stage action, no doubt owing to what is perceived as the chorus' spatial separation from the actors. However, this is an anachronistic misconception prompted by modern bourgeois

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21 Quotation from Hall (1997b) 156.

22 For a definition of semiotization see Revermann (2006a) 50: "Semiotization [...] is the term used in theatre semiotics to describe the fundamentally artificial nature of theatrical communication between manipulators in the world of the play and an audience willing and expecting to collaborate." The main consequence of this semiotic collusion between stage agents and audience is that, from "the viewpoint of the theatre audience, everything on stage, 'improvisation' included, is construed as happening for a reason, the product of careful manipulation and engineering on part of the actors, the director, or anyone else involved in the theatrical event." On semiotization see further Elam (2002) 7–9.

23 Ewans 2008.

24 On this last point see also Wiles (2004). For a modern practitioner's viewpoint on ancient theatre masks see McCart (2007).

25 See e.g. Goldhill (2007) 45; Ley (2007a) 114.

notions of the theatre as a segregated or "framed" activity, in which the exclusive focus of attention is the proscenium-arch stage, typically spotlighted as opposed to the darkened auditorium which causes the audience literally to fade out.[26] By contrast, the open-air ancient theatre is aggressively inclusive, as it forces the spectators to *participate* in the spectacle rather than merely to view the stage action as if it were an isolated or "framed" activity.[27] This is achieved not least by the (arguably) circular shape of the orchestra, which enabled "a democratic Athenian community" to gather "in a circle in order to contemplate itself in relation to the fictive world of the play".[28] This heightened sense of collective identity was undoubtedly enhanced even further by the audience's awareness that the event was financed, organized, and enacted by their fellow-citizens; indeed, the chorus consisted of a not-inconsiderable number of Athenians, given that each year, in just the City Dionysia, some 1160 citizens must have participated in tragic, comic, and dithyrambic choruses. As a result, in ancient theatre there was no such thing as the quasi-proverbial "fourth wall", the notional boundary separating the fictive world enacted onstage from the everyday world of the audience. By occupying positions in the tiered, semi-circular auditorium, which could be perceived as an extension or projection of the circular orchestra, citizen spectators integrated themselves into the citizen chorus, as well as merging with their fellow spectators, who were in full view of each other. And as the orchestra was, at most, only slightly lower by comparison to the mildly elevated stage, the border separating the citizen chorus from the actors was blurred. The audience was encouraged to contemplate itself in relation to the fictive world of the play. Play and audience became mutually permeable, spilling over into each other.

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26 Cf. Revermann (2006a) 35. See also Meineck, this volume.

27 See further Wiles (1997) 52.

28 Quotation from Wiles (n. 27). On the controversy over the shape of the orchestra in the Theatre of Dionysus at Athens (circular vs. rectilinear) see Scullion (1994), esp. 38–41 and Wiles (1997) 44–52, both making an eloquent case in favour of a circular orchestra; see however Csapo (2007) 99, 106 and Meineck, this volume, for counter-arguments in favour of a rectilinear shape (both of them with further important bibliography). Whatever the truth may be, Wiles' (1997) 49–50 use of Andocides, *On the Mysteries* 38 as evidence for a circular orchestra is misguided. Andocides' report that the conspirators of 415 BC stood in the orchestra of the Dionysiac theatre κύκλῳ ἀνὰ πέντε καὶ δέκα ἄνδρας does not mean that they arranged themselves "in a perceptible circle" dictated by the circular space of the orchestra. As M.L. West (2000b) pointed out with reference to a similar argument put forth by Revermann (1999) with respect to Heniochus fr. 5.6–8 K-A, "κύκλῳ means simply 'on all sides, all round', and does not (any more than English 'round' < *rotundus*) imply a circular area."

Performance and Iconography

One of the criticisms levelled against those scholars who seek to reconstruct a grammar of dramatic technique for ancient plays is that their effort entails a severe risk of methodological circularity. As was pointed out by Goldhill (1989) 176–180, our notions of ancient stagecraft must rely principally on the dramatic texts themselves—that is, the very texts that those notions purport to elucidate. This would be tantamount to making arbitrary assumptions about the meaning of a coded text, then using the "deciphered" text to confirm those assumptions. Given the paucity of non-textual information about ancient performances, several scholars turned to the study of the archaeological and pictorial record in an attempt to locate independent evidence supporting (or challenging) current assumptions about ancient performance.

In the 1960s, T.B.L. Webster pioneered a new approach to the history and reception of Greek drama by publishing a series of wide-ranging and painstakingly researched volumes cataloguing artefacts that may be taken to reflect performances of tragedy, comedy, and satyr-play.[29] At a time when "interdisciplinarity" had not yet entered academic parlance, Webster's path-breaking and ambitious project in many ways anticipated (in the face of dogged and often contemptuous opposition from more text-centred scholars) the now well-established tenets that Greek drama cannot be adequately understood unless contextualized in its proper frame of reference, and that the meticulous study and interpretation of theatre-inspired artefacts is a tool of cardinal importance in this long and arduous process of contextualization.

In later times, the study of iconography as a means towards a fuller appreciation of the performance of drama was undertaken by Taplin (1993), who investigated a number of South-Italian vase-paintings, which bespeak a familiarity with Attic tragedy and comedy. Already in 1980, the publication of the so-called Würzburg Telephus vase had been interpreted as evidence for the performance of Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae* in South Italy within a few decades of the original performance.[30] For Taplin, such vases, far from representing an indigenous tradition of *phlyax*-farce, are potential evidence for performances of Attic drama in South Italy, especially if their details can only be made sense of through a knowledge of the relevant tragic or comic play, or if their overall understanding is enhanced by such

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[29] Webster (1960), (1961), (1962), followed by second and, in some cases, third editions (see bibliography); Trendall and Webster (1971); cf. Trendall (1959/^{2}1967).

[30] See Csapo (1986); Taplin (1987b).

knowledge (cf. also Taplin 1997). At about the same time, Green (1994) used a large array of archaeological evidence, ranging from vase-paintings and sculptures to terracottas and mosaics, as a heuristic tool to gauge the impact of dramatic genres on society, including popular culture, over a vast period of time, covering over a thousand years. Green argued that the experience of the theatre was truly central to the lives (both emotional and social) of a considerable chunk of the population, not only in Athens but also in the Greek world at large.[31] Adopting a similar approach, Revermann (2005) published an exemplary case-study of the "Cleveland Medea" Calyx Crater (a Lucanian vase dated to ca. 400 BC), in which he provided insights into the cultural history of Greek tragedy in the fourth century BC by attempting to situate visual evidence into its social, aesthetic and intellectual context. The central questions here concern, first, the process whereby the painter reconfigured a theatre-inspired topic in order to achieve a personal (re)telling of the narrative; and, second, the context of use within which the vase was designed to perform and interact with its target viewers.[32]

The use of iconography as a means of providing privileged access into near-contemporary perceptions of ancient performance was forcefully contested by Small (2003), who argued that ancient images seemingly inspired from the theatre cannot in any way be "illustrations" of any given performance, even when they include inscriptions pointing to specific plays. The vast majority of such images, Small insisted, reflect a variety of sources, including oral traditions such as free-floating mythic narratives, which simply happen to be based around the same mythic cycles that inspired specific plays by specific authors. Thus, the pictorial record can be no safe guide to the performance (or any particular performance) of ancient drama, much less to the reconstruction of lost plays. In a similar spirit, a few years earlier Giuliani (1996) had concluded, with reference to depictions of the Rhesus myth in art, that vase-paintings are not illustrations of specific dramatic performances or epic narratives but representations of mythic matrices configured (under the influence of epic, drama, or other vehicles of myth) in a specific society at a specific point in time. Indeed, Giuliani interestingly conjectured that Apulian vase-paintings seemingly bespeaking theatrical influence may actually reflect mythic narratives embedded in funerary declamation by orators familiar

[31] For a more specific discussion of the relation between tragedy and iconography see Green (1991), esp. 33–44.

[32] Cf. Revermann (2005) 4. More recently, Revermann (2010) published a significantly expanded version of that article.

with classical tragedy.[33] Whether one accepts Giuliani's interpretation or not, he has drawn attention to a parameter that is all too often ignored, namely the context of use that the vases were made for.

The tide, however, may be turning yet again. Recently, Taplin (2007) reasserted his view that a significant number of surviving Greek vase-paintings can be related to tragedy, and that an awareness of the interplay between theatre and visual arts can lead to a fuller appreciation of both media, as well as to a more complete picture of the cultural history of antiquity. Against the tendency to isolate image from text, Csapo (2010) ix has made the important observation that the artists' selectivity and distortions, while certainly making for an unstraightforward relationship between image and dramatic production, may actually enhance the value of iconography as a source of evidence for theatre history. For "[s]election and distortion have a great deal to tell us about the way ancient artists saw or liked to see or, better still, thought their customers liked to see drama in the ancient world. Because what is or is not present in a picture is due not to the mechanical reproduction but the imaginative reconstruction of a performance, the artifacts can reveal what caught the fancy of theater viewers and how this changed with time, place, usage, social class, or political orientation."[34] The interrelation of image and stage has been once more proclaimed by Hart (2010) 57: "While knowledge of the play as it has come down to us is essential for comprehending the iconography fully, an awareness of the many ways in which performance must have inspired and influenced these depictions plays a critical role in our understanding as well."[35]

Contextualizing Performance

Despite the advances made by scholars towards a genuine understanding of the use and function of the ancient scenic space, on the basis of material and artistic as well as textual evidence, such approaches may be thought by some to project an anachronistic image of theatre as a secluded, autonomous

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33 Against Giuliani's hypothesis see Taplin (2007) 165 with nn. 21–22. Further, J.R. Green pointed out (*BMCR* 2007.10.37, n. 5) that famous passages from tragedy might have been recited at funerals "by out-of-work or second-grade actors".

34 See also Csapo (2010), chapters 1 and 2, where he eloquently discusses a number of pictorial renderings of known plays.

35 The subject of the depiction of myths in art is one that exceeds the scope of this introduction. One may consult with profit, e.g., March (1987); Carpenter (1991); Shapiro (1994); and most recently Woodford (2003), who gives a judicious account of the processes whereby artists transform myths into images, often through radical selection, adaptation or even distortion.

locus of fictive representation, distinctly framed and demarcated from the "everyday" world.[36] By treating theatrical space, visible as well as invisible, as an exclusively verbal and visual construct configured by the script and by scenic space, the approaches described above may seem to ignore the numerous ways in which theatrical space and consequently the experience of theatre in antiquity were variously conditioned—infused with meaning, infiltrated, encroached upon, or otherwise affected—by such factors as surrounding landscape features, architectural framework, traces of ritual activity in the theatre or its vicinity, embedded reminiscences of non-theatrical performances, and so on.

More recent research on the spatial dynamics of ancient performance has brought about a deeper awareness of the variety of factors that came into play. Adopting an aggressively structuralist stance, Wiles (1997) explored, among other things, the binary oppositions—such as "inside : outside", "up : down", "east : west" etc.—around which theatrical space is constructed. Essential to Wiles' overall argument is an acknowledgement of the interdependence of theatrical and extra-theatrical spaces: the construction of theatrical space by the audience, Wiles argued, was informed by their awareness of surrounding spatial determinants, such as topographical features or architectural elements, and also of such spatial configurations as the loci of ritual or political activity.[37] One of the many corollaries of Wiles' analysis is that, in arguing for firm binary polarities, he postulates a Dionysiac theatre where spatial relations (such as the "right : left" dichotomy that he sees as being embedded in its orientation) and concomitant symbolisms are already firmly set in place, rather than being left to the audience to construct afresh for each play, as earlier scholars (especially Hourmouziades and Taplin) had argued.[38]

Taking a different approach from Wiles' structuralist/semiotic emphasis, Rehm (2002) has argued for an "ecology" of the ancient theatre, whereby theatrical space, in its various configurations, is in a state of continuous interplay with other significant spaces within which it is "nested" ("nesting" is

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[36] For a pithy statement of this traditional definition of theatre cf. e.g. D.F. Sutton, *BMCR* 2004.07.61 (in a review of D. Wiles, *A Short History of Western Performance Space*, Cambridge 2003): "For true theater to occur, there must be a clearly understood demarcation between the dramatic space occupied by the actors and the everyday space occupied by the audience."

[37] However, as Bassi (2001) 347 points out, Wiles' structuralist bias leads to "some indecision about the relationship of drama to democracy since ideology is not easily reducible to binary oppositions."

[38] See Wiles (1997) 133–160 *passim*.

a concept Rehm borrows from cognitive psychologist James J. Gibson). These significant spaces may range from physical surroundings through cultic loci to sites fraught with political or social meaning. Thus, in Rehm's analysis, the Theatre of Dionysus in Athens may be seen as defined by six spatial categories, ranging from "theatrical space" (the physical components of theatre) to "reflexive space" (anachronistic elements drawing the contemporary polis of Athens into the world of the plays, or allowing the plays' mythical world to spill over into contemporary reality).[39]

To take but a few examples of this conditioning process, the auditorium of the Theatre of Dionysus in Athens was literally encroached upon by the adjoining Odeum, which was used for musical performances but also for the *proagōn*, a pre-performance event of an essentially metatheatrical nature, in which information was imparted regarding the plays to be presented.[40] As Revermann (2006a) 170 observes, the *proagōn* was, at least in theory, an opportunity to "manipulate expectations in any way a playwright deemed desirable, with potentially far-reaching implications for shaping the actor/audience dynamics". The visible proximity of the Odeum no doubt encouraged associations between the spectacle performed before the audience in the theatre and the preceding manipulation, or conditioning, of their perceptions in the Odeum.[41] Revermann (2006a) 113–129 has produced a fine analysis of the "environmental proxemics" of the Theatre of Dionysus, "which allow for a whole range of spatial responses and interactions with its immediate surroundings".[42]

The theatrical performances were preceded not only by the *proagōn* but also by a variety of ritual(ized) performances, not all of which need have been part of the festival proper, though they will no doubt have conditioned the audience's perception of it. Prior to the festival, there would be a religious procession bringing Dionysus' effigy into the theatre (termed εἰσαγωγὴ ἀπὸ τῆς ἐσχάρας in Hellenistic inscriptions),[43] and a πομπή leading up to

[39] For instances in which tragedy implicitly acknowledges contemporary extra-theatrical spaces or situations see Easterling (1997b) 165–168.

[40] On the *proagōn* see Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 67–68; for English translations of the ancient evidence see Csapo and Slater (1994) 109–110 (nos. 4–8).

[41] On the theatrical potentialities of the Odeum's proximity, and on their exploitation in Cratinus' *Thracian Women*, see Revermann (2006a) 302–305. On other possible symbolisms of the Odeum see Wiles (1997) 54–57, 140–141.

[42] Quotations from Revermann (2006a) 113.

[43] *I.G.* ii^2 1006 (122–121 BC); *I.G.* ii^2 1011 (106–105 BC); for the epigraphic evidence see further Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 60 nn. 1, 2, 4; for English translations of the primary sources see Csapo and Slater (1994) 110–111 (nos. 9–13).

sacrifices in the precinct of Dionysus, possibly in connection with choral dances at various altars.[44] On the first day of the performances, before the scenic spectacle began, the city's *stratēgoi* would have poured the customary libations, the tribute of the allied cities would have been displayed, public honours to benefactors of the *polis* of Athens would have been announced, and the war orphans would have paraded in the full hoplite gear provided by the *polis* in recognition of their fathers' sacrifice and as a reminder of a citizen's principal duty.[45] The symbolic import of these ceremonies, in which the dignity and the authority of the *polis* was affirmed and celebrated, its sense of identity and solidarity asserted, and the duties of the individual to it publicly underscored, has been most eloquently discussed by Goldhill (1990) 100–114.[46] In the same article, Goldhill has underlined the problem posed by the highly individualistic and often anti-communally transgressive behaviour of tragic personalities such as Ajax or Antigone, and has argued that tragedy both depicts the reversal of societal norms by such individuals and casts their actions in a certain glorious light, thereby bringing out the fundamental problem inherent in the integration of outstanding individuals into society. Thus, tragedy's problematization both of the security of civic norms and of transgressive individualism would have been in stark contrast with the pre-performance ceremonies that sought to affirm civic norms and circumscribe the individual's role within the *polis*. The problematization of civic discourse in tragedy is inevitably tinted by the affirmation of the same discourse in the ceremonies preceding dramatic performances, and vice versa.[47] As Goldhill (1990) 98 puts it, "the understanding of a play in performance requires

44 For the evidence see Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 61–63; for English translations see Csapo and Slater (1994) 113–115 (nos. 17–27).

45 For the evidence on these ceremonies see Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 58–59 (with nn. 2–3), 95–96; for English translations see Csapo and Slater (1994) 117–119 (nos. 33–37), 160–161 (no. 112).

46 Since Goldhill (1990) is an expanded version of Goldhill (1987), references will be made only to the former. Especially on public honours during the "preplay" ceremonies and on their political import see P. Wilson 2009a.

47 Adopting a comparable approach, Hall (1997a) has argued that Athenian tragedy, while promoting and asserting the dominant *polis* discourse, simultaneously challenges official ideology by including in its multivocal form viewpoints otherwise excluded from the public discourse of the city, such as those of non-Athenians, women, and slaves. In a recent collection of studies, Hall (2006) has focused on "the interface between classical Athenian society and its theatrical fictions by looking in detail at a series of revealing world/stage *interactions*—that is, at a series of ways in which phenomena manifested in the fictional world of the stage, and phenomena in the world that produced that stage, were engaged in a process of continuous mutual pollination" (quotation from pp. 3–4).

an understanding of the complexities of a context for performance which involves more than the technical details of the instantiation of a script".[48]

II. *Roman Drama in Performance*

Overview of Scholarship

Performance criticism of Roman drama, both comic and tragic, is a recent development in classical scholarship. The pioneering publications, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, on Latin comedy by influential German scholars—such as Schlegel, Ritschl, Leo, and Fraenkel—focused either on the various degrees to which (mainly) the comic playwrights of the early Republic were indebted to Greek drama, or on the appreciation of the linguistic, stylistic, and metrical features of these authors, which rendered their texts worthy of serious study as autonomous literary creations regardless of their respective literary models.[49] Both of these methodological approaches yielded invaluable results and laid the foundations for a better understanding not only of the originality of individual Latin playwrights but also of the ways in which ancient cultures developed and national identities were formed. But studies of this type (with the possible exception of Fraenkel's remarkable work)[50] paid little or no attention to the *performative* aspect of the plays in

[48] For additional considerations on the question of how the Great Dionysia, and the performances included in that festival, relate to the dominant ideological structures of democracy see Goldhill (2000a). Such political readings of Greek tragedy, which seek to discover additional layers of meaning by juxtaposing performed drama to the institutions of the democratic city, have come under criticism from various quarters. See e.g. Versnel (1995); Griffin (1998) and (1999), with a response by Seaford (2000); P.J. Rhodes (2003); Carter (2007) ch. 2.

[49] See Schlegel (1809) 354–361, reprinted under the title 'Die neuere Komödie' in Lefèvre (1973) 21–24; Ritschl (1845); Leo (1912) 87–187; and especially Fraenkel (1922/1960/2007) (from now on page-references to Fraenkel's book will be those of the revised Italian translation of 1960 and of the English translation published in 2007). The views of nineteenth-century German scholars on Roman comedy are discussed by Halporn (1993) 191–194, but his account is greatly indebted to the insightful remarks of Fraenkel (1960) 1–6, 399 = (2007) 1–4, 390.

[50] Fraenkel's meticulous and text-focussed approach to the search for original theatrical patterns in Plautine drama does not suggest that he himself was insensitive to the theatrical dimension of the plays he discussed. Elaine Fantham, who attended Fraenkel's lectures and seminars on comedy at Oxford in the early 1950s, describes how 'Fraenkel analysed Plautus' techniques of enhancing dialogue, action and context'; see her paper 'Eduard Fraenkel: Vorplautinisches und Plautinisches' delivered at the American Philological Association Annual Meeting in Chicago in 2008 (for an abstract see http://apaclassics.org/index.php/annual_meeting/abstracts/abstracts_for_the_2008_annual_meeting_in_chicago). This is the impression one gets also from Stephanie West's recollection of the great man (S. West 2007).

question and did not consider the practicalities of staging such texts, the significance of visualising plays as a sequence of scenes enacted in (temporary or permanent) theatres or at other locations perceived by the audience as theatres, or the social and moral implications of acting in the Roman world. It is all too easy to forget that, at least in the Republic, the comedies of Livius Andronicus and his successors, and the tragedies of Ennius and his contemporaries, were not texts destined for private reading or public recitation but scripts composed for live performance in a public space in front of an audience.

This may seem an obvious point now, but specialised discussions of aspects of staging and of the visual and material culture of comedy and tragedy in Rome (such as masks, costumes, doubling of roles, and specific parts of the theatrical building or of the locations which served as performance spaces) were rare before the 1920s.[51] The scholarly landscape changed with the publication, in 1920, of Margarete Bieber's volume on the material and pictorial evidence pertaining to ancient theatre (including the Roman period), a work that had an even greater impact when its richly illustrated English version appeared in 1939;[52] happily this coincided with the publication of a series of studies (most of them articles by William Beare) that focused exclusively on Roman staging topics. Beare published articles dealing with, amongst other things, side-entrances, seats, the meaning of the term *angiportum*, masks, the stage curtain, and costumes on the Hellenistic and the Roman stages.[53] It is possible, then, to see how, at least in the Anglophone world, these publications, as well as their contemporary studies on Greek theatre production,[54] not only contributed to the growing scholarly interest in Roman scenic antiquities but also paved the way for the appearance in 1950 of the comprehensive monographs on Roman theatre by Beare and (two years later) by George Duckworth, whose volume contains two very useful chapters on the visual

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51 Cf. e.g. Bauer (1902); Saunders (1909), (1911a), (1911b), and (1913); Prescott (1910); Gow (1912); and Rambo (1915).

52 Bieber (^{1}1939) was far more detailed and scholarly than the earlier volume of J.T. Allen (1927) on Greco-Roman stage antiquities. Both Bieber (1920) and Bieber (^{1}1939) have, of course, been superseded by the latter's second edition, the invaluable Bieber (^{2}1961), with almost completely revised chapters on the Roman theatre and an additional 300 illustrations. However, her discussion on the architectural aspect of theatrical buildings in Italy and the provinces is now inferior to the excellent study of Sear (2006), on which more later.

53 See Beare (1938), (1939a), (1939b) (building on Harsh 1937), (1939c), (1941), and (1949). The fruitful subject of exits and entrances in the Latin comedy of the Republic had already been discussed by Bennet (1932) and Johnston (1933).

54 These include Pickard-Cambridge (1946) and (^{1}1953/^{2}1968), and Webster (1948), (1949), and (1956).

aspect of Latin comedy: 'Presentation and Staging' and 'Stage Conventions and Techniques'.[55] Until quite recently the second edition (1961) of Bieber's volume and the monographs of Beare and Duckworth constituted the starting point for students and scholars interested in the literary and archaeological evidence for the staging and performance of Roman comedies, tragedies, and "low" kinds of theatrical entertainment (such as mime) in Rome and Italy during the Republic and the Empire.

It is worth noting here, in anticipation of the later section on the performance and/or performability of Senecan drama, that Bieber and Beare held diametrically opposing views on whether or not Seneca's plays were given full-scale stage productions in antiquity.[56] Beare's strong reservations were shared by Zwierlein, who, in 1966, became the most authoritative and influential exponent on paper of the view that, for structural and dramaturgical reasons, Seneca's plays could not have been composed for public performance but had instead been designed for recitation.[57] Zwierlein's views fuelled a heated debate which has not yet fully settled (more on this later). But the exciting discussion concerning the practicalities of Imperial tragic theatre production was somewhat upstaged by the fascinating discovery, in 1968, of new papyrus fragments of Menander that could be directly compared to their Plautine "adaptations". This event fruitfully re-opened the debate on how Plautus went about "translating" or—to use the Latin term—"turning"[58] his Greek originals into Latin.[59] It also managed—inadvertently and for about two decades—to steer scholarly attention away from further exploration of the equally significant extra-textual aspects of Latin drama, especially in the area of Republican tragedy.

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55 Beare (^{1}1950); page-references henceforth will be only to the revised third edition of 1964, which usefully incorporates reprints of many of Beare's earlier publications on staging matters; Duckworth (1952) 73–138.

56 See Bieber (^{2}1961) 232: "There hardly could be a better frame and more gorgeous background for the tragedies of Seneca (AD 5–AD 65) than this type of *scaenae frons*, which belongs to his period." Cf. Beare (^{3}1964) 235: "It is incredible that Seneca, one of the richest men in Rome and a man who openly admits his distaste for close contact with the common people or their amusements, should have composed plays intended to win the favour of the general public. The dramatist who writes for the stage must take into account not only the tastes of his audience but the requirements of the stage; and the internal evidence of the Senecan plays shows that the author has not visualized the actions of his characters."

57 Before Zwierlein (1966) see Marti (1945), who had argued that the tragedies of Seneca were meant to be read as a group representing a *corpus* of philosophical (Stoic) propaganda. See Franko in this volume.

58 *Vertere* (literally, "to turn") is the verb which the Prologue speaker in some plays of Plautus and Terence employed to refer to the process of rendering a Greek play into Latin: see, e.g., Pl. *As.* 11, *Trin.* 19; Ter. *Eun.* 7; and cf. Cic. *Fin.* 1.7.

59 See Handley (1968) and, among others, Bain (1979b) and Damen (1992) and (1995). For a most sensible assessment of the scholarly contributions so far see Danese (2002).

The last twenty years, however, have seen several important studies in many areas related to vital components of Roman theatrical performance, such as the stage and the architectural space surrounding it, masks, costumes, props, acting style, and comic business involving non-verbal behaviour.[60] Furthermore, there is a stronger emphasis on the performative aspects of theatrical genres other than Republican comedy and Imperial tragedy: tragedy in the Republic, mime, and pantomime are no longer ignored or briefly dealt with in accounts of Roman drama.[61] Authors of recent commentaries on individual plays of Plautus, Terence, and Seneca pay attention to issues of dramaturgy and theatrical visuality as well as to points of philology and interpretation.[62] This is arguably the most important development in Latin performance-criticism, as it signals a shift in methodological approach: the texts of the Latin playwrights are viewed as performance events, and metre, language registers and word morphology are no longer studied as an end in themselves but are combined with evidence from Roman material culture, social history, and politics to enhance our understanding and appreciation of what such performances may have meant to their original audiences.

In the last twenty years, there have been at least five contributions bringing again to the fore the question of the physical aspects of Latin drama (mainly comedy). First, the monograph of Beacham (1991), in an overview of the history of Roman theatre (including tragedy, mime, and pantomime), employed textual, historical, and visual evidence (Roman wall paintings found in houses at Rome and at, or near, Pompeii) to reconstruct images and a full-scale replica of the temporary theatrical stage erected in Rome before the appearance of permanent theatrical structures.[63] Then came a cautiously

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60 Details will be mentioned below in the relevant paragraphs of the sections on 'Republican Theatre' and 'Imperial Drama'.

61 An excellent example of this is Manuwald (2010), which includes discussions of occasions and venues for dramatic performances, actors, and productions (15–20), as well as a collection of the *testimonia* on theatre buildings (58–67) and on sensational stage-spectacles (74–81). On mime and pantomime see also Csapo and Slater (1994) 369–389, as well as Hall's detailed discussion in this volume with earlier bibliography.

62 As far as comedy is concerned, one would single out the excellent volumes of Barsby (1999) and Christenson (2000). For Senecan commentaries see below n. 85.

63 His theory has been sceptically received in some reviews and in recent accounts of Roman stagecraft: see *CR* 42 (1992) 322 [P. Brown], *JRS* 83 (1993) 196 [N. Lowe], *CW* 86 (1992–1993) 364 [G.W.M. Harrison]; Marshall (2006) 32; and Manuwald (2011) 65. Before the publication of Beacham (1991), his views on wall painting and the stage had been presented in Beacham (1980); in 1984 Beacham had a full-scale replica wooden stage built at the Arts Centre of the University of Warwick in order to stage a series of Plautine comedies and test whether or

argued but ground-breaking article by Goldberg (1998), in which he re-examined the issue of productions of Roman comedy in front of temples. Developing the views of a valuable but neglected book by Hanson (1959), Goldberg took as his case-study the performance of Plautus' *Pseudolus* at the Theatre of Magna Mater during the Megalesian games in 191 BCE. His discussion not only includes important observations on the small scale of the improvised theatrical venues of Plautus' era, but also takes religious, political, and moral factors into consideration in order to explain why the Roman upper classes seem to have resisted (until 55 BCE) the building of permanent stone theatres. More recently, the architectural design of theatres in Rome, in Italian regions outside Rome, and in the provincial areas of the Roman empire has been superbly discussed and richly illustrated in Sear (2006), which contains comprehensive discussions on how the building of theatres was financed and how different social classes were related to different seating areas in the auditorium, as well as an examination of the different parts of a theatre, the buildings related to it, and the various architectural designs exemplified in theatres throughout the Empire. The 300-page catalogue which complements the discussion of the aforementioned topics includes details and plans of theatrical buildings in Greece, Asia Minor, the Levant, North Africa, Spain, the Balkans, Britain, Gaul, and Germany; there is therefore a valuable emphasis on theatrical spaces and architecture in areas outside Rome, a feature which Sear usefully shares with Rawson's detailed, non-Romanocentric, discussion of theatrical life in the whole of Italy during the Republic (Rawson 1985).

The multi-dimensional topic of Roman comic stagecraft has received detailed attention in the impressive and substantial monograph of Marshall (2006), who, like Beacham, discusses the evidence from the perspective of a theatre practitioner as well as from that of a classical scholar. His work explores how and where a Plautine play was set up; why it is important for our appreciation of Roman comedy to know about masks, music, and metre; and finally what observations can be made about stage action and improvisation in Plautus. Although many of the topics covered here had already been dealt with in Beare's and Duckworth's works,[64] Marshall's approach is refreshing because it focuses sharply on aspects of stagecraft and performance: for example, the quality of the costumes, the size of theatrical

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not the action of the plays was smoothly realised within the framework of the constructed set. Beacham's contribution to this volume is a fascinating account of the significance of theatricality in the Roman domestic environment.

64 See Marshall (2006) 1–15 ('Introduction'), 16–20 ('Opportunities for Performance'), 49–56 ('Set').

troupes, the doubling of roles, the comic routines, and the serious tone of some Plautine scenes. Additionally, like Beacham, Marshall enthusiastically interprets Plautus' texts as scripts; he is thus less interested in Plautus' style, language, and debts to Greek New Comedy. His experience in directing and in performing in a number of Plautine plays has enabled Marshall to ask some penetrating questions about the position of actors on the stage ("blocking"), the dramatic pace, and the use of gestures. Marshall's work is now supplemented by Manuwald (2011) 41–186, which is currently the most accessible and bibliographically up-to-date overview of Republican theatrical productions with examples from comedy (both *fabula palliata* and *fabula togata*), tragedy and historical plays (on which Manuwald's scholarly expertise is invaluable), mime, pantomime, and Atellane comedy.

Republican Theatre

Theatre nowadays is normally a comfortable experience. Unless viewers go to watch a play in open-air locations such as the theatres of Herod Atticus in Athens and of Epidaurus in the Peloponnese, the expectation is that they will be seated inside a building which has been specifically built or modified to function as a theatre, and is permanently set within an urban area. It is therefore easy to forget that the first performance of the plays of Plautus, Terence, and other Republican playwrights (comic and tragic), whose plays have come down to us only in fragments, took place in Rome in temporary, improvised, open-air, but by no means simple, wooden constructions, which no longer survive, but may have had very elaborate and expensive decoration, and were situated in non-theatrical locations such as the *forum*, the Circus, or the area in front of the temple of the god to whom a festival was dedicated. The shape and size of these stages cannot be described with certainty. However, it has been reasonably argued that permanent architectural features, such as the tiers of a Circus or the steps leading to the entrance of a temple, would have been used (at least in early theatrical venues of the Republic) as the auditorium facing a temporary stage, which would have been erected specifically for the "dramatic games" (*ludi scaenici*) of a festival, and dismantled once the festival was over.[65] This

[65] Temporary theatres in Rome: Vitr. 5.5.7, Sear (2006) 54–57, Marshall (2006) 47, Manuwald (2011) 55–56; and cf. above, n. 63. Lavish decoration: Val. Max. 2.4.1–3, 6, and Sear (2006) 55–56, Manuwald (2010) 64–67. Theatrical space in the *forum*: Moore (1991), Marshall (2006) 40–45 (discussing evidence such as Pl. *Curc.* 466–484) and Manuwald (2011) 57 with earlier bibliography. In the Circus: Polyb. 30.22.1, cited by Athen. 14.615a, and Franko in this volume.

arrangement applied not only to the Plautine and Terentian adaptations of Greek comedies (subsequently called *fabulae palliatae*, "Latin plays in a Greek garment") but also to theatrical genres in which plays were probably not based on any Greek literary model: for instance, after the festival of the *Floralia* became annual (173 BCE), the mime-plays that formed part of its repertory would presumably have been performed in front of the temple of Flora on the Aventine hill.[66]

The temporary stage and the provisional auditorium remained distinct as parts of improvised theatrical structures in Rome until September 55 BCE, when Pompey dedicated the first stone theatre as part of a massive complex, which included a temple dedicated in 52 BCE. Built as a free-standing and self-contained architectural unit on a flat site in the Campus Martius, and joined with the temple of Venus "the Victorious" (*Victrix*) at the top of the auditorium, the Theatre of Pompey was inaugurated in a lavish fashion, seems to have combined architectural features attested in both Greek and Italic (theatrical and non-theatrical) buildings, and forms a landmark in the development of Roman culture. Its structure and its differences from Hellenistic theatres have been discussed extensively, and the most useful overview of its history is in Sear (2006), who also provides a plan of the theatre and earlier bibliography on it.[67] The existence of the Theatre of Pompey and the appearance in the Imperial period of other stone theatres, such as the Theatre of Marcellus (inaugurated by Augustus in 13 or 11 BCE) and the Theatre of Balbus (dated to 19–13 BCE), do not mean either that temporary stages were no longer erected[68] or that there were no private stages in domestic environments (consider, for example, Nero's private theatre: Tac. *Ann.* 15.39). Various theatrical venues—different in concept, size, and scale—co-existed with each other and may have provided accommodation for spectacles other than plays.[69]

What were the features of the stage-set for a comedy or a tragedy that the Roman audience would have seen on a temporary stage in the early Republic?

In front of a temple: Cic. *Har. Resp.* 24, and Hanson (1959), Goldberg (1998), Manuwald (2011) 57. Seats: Beare (1939a), Rawson (1987), Moore (1994).

66 See Panayotakis (2010) 25–26 for primary sources and recent bibliography on this festival.

67 Sear (2006) 57–61, 133–135, Plan 25, and Figure 30; and Manuwald (2011) 62–63. Lavish spectacles in its inauguration: Erasmo (2004) 83–91; Beard (2007) 22–29; Manuwald (2011) 62, 73; differences from Greek theatres and cultural landmark of Roman identity: Wallace-Hadrill (2008) 153–169.

68 See Cic. *Fam.* 8.2.1 and Manuwald (2011) 63.

69 For instance, singing or dramatised recitals of literature: Pliny *NH* 37.19; Panayotakis (2008).

Vitruvius (5.6.8–9) refers to three possible types of scenery (depending on whether the play performed was a comedy, a tragedy or a satyr-play), and Valerius Maximus (2.4.6) mentions that the Romans witnessed painted scenery for the first time when Claudius Pulcher covered the stage with a variety of colours (99 BCE). To what extent either of these interesting pieces of information is valid for the sets in the time of Plautus and Terence remains unclear.[70] Overall, the most comprehensive and sensible discussion on theatrical sets during the Republic is Marshall (2006), whose account is confined to comedy.[71] He rightly visualises a minimalistic, temporary, and wooden set with a simple (possibly painted) backdrop as set decoration and with three openings functioning as the doors to the houses of the characters in the play (the plot may not have required all three doors to be used). This type of generic set would have worked for tragedies, comedies (both *fabulae palliatae* and *fabulae togatae*), and historical plays (this much is clear from the remarks of the Prologue speaker in Plautus' *Menaechmi* 72–76), and the audience would have understood from the script whether they were looking at, for instance, a royal palace or an ordinary house, a city-street or a seashore, a stable or a temple.[72] The actors would have come to the performance area (*pulpitum*) in front of the *scaenae frons* either through the openings of the background building, which functioned as the doors of the characters' houses, or through the side entrances (*versurae*), which, in the audience's imagination, would have led to off-stage locations. Marshall is surely right both to challenge the scholarly view that a fixed convention existed regarding the locations to which the exit stage left and the exit stage right would have led, and to stress the importance of the general juxtaposition between "foreign" and "local" in the Roman audience's perception of off-stage geography in Latin adaptations of Greek New Comedy.[73] Part of the on-stage performance area would, in all likelihood, have been occupied by an altar,

70 Marshall (2006) 49 n. 122 is sceptical about the plausibility of Valerius' testimony; Manuwald (2011) 68 n. 97 accepts it as true.

71 Marshall (2006) 49–56. His discussion should be supplemented by the information given by Manuwald (2011) 69–72 on stage sets in Republican tragedy.

72 For stage sets in individual plays one should look at the relevant commentaries (e.g. for Plautus' *Menaechmi* see Gratwick (1993) 33 or for *Amphitruo* Christenson (2000) 20–21), but a useful overview with examples from all types of Roman drama (including *fabula Atellana*) may be found in Manuwald (2011) 69.

73 Traditionally the contrast is between the forum and the countryside/the harbour, but it is not always clear in the extant scripts which of these destinations lies in which direction. Earlier bibliography on side-entrances includes Rambo (1915), Johnston (1933), Beare (1938), and Duckworth (1952) 85–87. On polarities and wing entrances see Leigh (2004) 105–111; Marshall (2006) 51.

which may have been placed in front of a door-opening to indicate that the audience was looking at a temple, and may have played an important role in the story (as it does, for instance, in Plautus' *Rudens* 691–885 and *Mostellaria* 1094–1180).[74] There was no stage curtain at the time of Plautus and Terence (this was introduced to Rome in 133 BCE). On the other hand, a small back-curtain or screen, possibly functioning as a 'door' or 'entrance' for the actors, and a type of clapper attached to an actor's foot, seem to have been particularly associated in ancient sources with mime shows, but we cannot be certain that these stage properties would have appeared in early productions of mime spectacles, for which there is little evidence.[75]

There is no doubt that props were used often and for various reasons on the Roman stage (for instance, as part of the stage set, or in relation to a character's costume, profession, and personality, or as a means of developing the plot), and that occasionally the playwright regarded stage objects as a central source of humour in a play (this is the case, for example, with the rope in the tug-of-war scene in Plautus' *Rudens* or the pot of gold in his *Aulularia*). The audience of Republican comedy and tragedy was not invited to *imagine* the props emphasized in the script, but actually saw, and expected to see, objects which had a particularly comic effect or symbolic value or a connection with a specific type of stock character either in literary tradition or in real life. For instance, the Roman audience would not have been surprised to see (they may even have expected to see) on stage the comic cook with a knife (Pl. *Aul.* 417) or the boastful soldier with a sword (Pl. *Mil.* 1–8) or the tragic Furies with burning torches (Cic. *Pis.* 46; *Rosc. Am.* 67). We should even visualise stage items which, though not explicitly mentioned in the script, were likely to have been present on the set because the director of the play aimed at plausible character-portrayal or realism in the production. For example, Varro (*RR* 2.11.11) mentions that the actor who played the part of the old farmer Menedemus in a revival of Terence's *Heauton Timorumenos* wore a leather jacket; there is no reference to such an item of clothing in Terence's extant script. Although it would have been perfectly possible, and sometimes even desirable, for the Roman audience to imagine

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74 Stage altar: Duckworth (1952) 83–84; Marshall (2006) 53–54; Manuwald (2011) 72.

75 *Aulaeum*, "the theatre-curtain": Isid. 18.43; Amm. Marc. 26.15; Beare (1941); Duckworth (1952) 84–85; Manuwald (2011) 69–70. *Siparium*, "small curtain or screen": Cic. *De prov. consul.* 6.14; Iuv. 8.185–186 and schol. Iuv. 8.186; Apul. *Met.* 1.8; Festus 458.11–13 L and Paul.–Fest. 459.4 L; Nicoll (1931) 105–109; Beare (1941); Sear (2006) 8; Manuwald (2011) 70. *Scabillum*, "a kind of hinged clapper attached to the sole of the foot, and used for beating time for dancers in the theatre" (*OLD* s.v. 2): Cic. *Pro Cael.* 64–65; *Auct. de dub. nomin.* = *GL* 590.4 K. Early mime-shows: Panayotakis (2010) 22–27.

a spectacle or an object described in an actor's eloquent soliloquy, because it may have been difficult to present on stage, it is worth remembering that opportunities for spectacular effects in tragedy and for crowd scenes in comedy were frequent during the Republic and became the norm in theatrical venues in the Empire; it is difficult therefore to reach certain conclusions about what an audience saw and heard in scenes that required complex staging in visual and aural terms.[76] In spite of the promising nature of the subject, a comprehensive monograph on props and audio-visual effects dealing with all types of Roman drama has yet to be written. In its absence, research on the topic has been served well by the three substantial articles of Ketterer, who provides a semiotic analysis of props in nine Plautine plays. His views, according to which the function of stage objects in the corpus he examined is either mechanical or signifying and carries with it various levels of importance and categories of meaning, need to be complemented by Marshall's sound observations on the fluidity of the interpretation of comic props and the potential comic value of stage properties in Plautus, as well as by Manuwald's remarks on spectacle in tragedy, and Sharrock's and Ley's comments on the physical dimension and material aspect of Plautine and Terentian dramaturgy.[77]

In contrast to the few items of bibliography currently available on Roman stage properties and scenic effects, scholarship on a variety of topics dealing with the *opsis* of a Roman actor in the Republic has advanced considerably during the last century. A lot has been written on masks (for all types of drama except mime, which seems not to have used masks) and their typology; on costumes and the problems presented by the literary and archaeological sources which provide information about what these were and how and by whom each of them was worn; on shoes and the conventions of footwear associated with different types of drama; and on the acting style and gestures linked with various kinds of theatrical entertainment and with non-verbal behaviour in non-dramatic areas, especially oratory.[78] The mere stage-

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[76] For spectacular effects in tragedy and comedy, as well as for some salutary remarks on the thin line between seeing and imagining objects, especially on the tragic stage, see Manuwald (2011) 72–73.

[77] Ketterer (1986a), (1986b), and (1986c); Marshall (2006) 66–72; Manuwald (2011) 72–73; Sharrock (2008); and Ley (2007b) 281–283. Props (in relation to Greek drama) are also discussed in this volume by Revermann, Tordoff, Fletcher, and Ley.

[78] In addition to the scholarly works on masks in New Comedy mentioned earlier in this Introduction (above, pp. 8–9), see also Duckworth (1952) 92–94; Beare (1939c) and (^{3}1964) 192–194; Marshall (2006) 126–158 (the most comprehensive discussion on masks, as far as comedy is concerned); McCart (2007); and Manuwald (2011) 79–80. Costume and shoes:

appearance of a Roman actor would have invited the audience to decode the visual information conveyed, in order to draw their own conclusions, even before the actor spoke, about the social and financial status, the age, sex, and reputation, and the serious nature or comic potential of the character he was playing. A sense of hierarchy, similar to the structured order of classes in Roman society, applied also to the stage, with, for instance, the actor of elevated tragedy, at one end of the spectrum, wearing a sombre mask and high boots, and the actor or actress of the low mime, at the other end, wearing neither shoes nor a mask. This typology, however, should not be seen as an externally imposed straight-jacket, confining the playwright's creative genius and resulting in boring and predictable plays, but as an opportunity for him to subvert generic conventions, thereby amusing his audience with unpredictable twists and turns either in character portrayal or in the variation of the play's atmosphere.[79] The latter effect is achieved, for instance, in Plautus' *Rudens* with the introduction of the tragic character of the maiden Palaestra, whose misfortunes are skilfully interwoven with the farcical banter of the pimp Labrax and other lowly figures, such as the greedy fisherman Gripus and the insolent slave Sceparnio, to create a masterful fusion of tragedy and comedy.

Much more difficult to describe in detail is the issue of stage action. There is no comprehensive overview of stage business in Roman comedy covering complete scripts and fragments: Panayotakis (2005) 181–187 and Marshall (2006) 159–202 are good starting points to the discussion, although both of them discuss only comic genres. It is difficult to say anything substantial about stage action in Republican tragedy, given the fragmentary status of the scripts. In very few cases there are in Latin scripts explicit stage-directions, such as those found in the Greek "Charition-mime" (dated to the Imperial period) that relates the rescue from the barbarians of the heroine Charition by means of wine and the malodorous farting of the comic slave.[80] But even

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Duckworth (1952) 88–92; Beare ([3]1964) 184–192; Marshall (2006) 56–66; and Manuwald (2011) 75–78 (invaluable for its information on tragic costume). Acting style and gestures: Csapo and Slater (1994) 283–285; Handley (2002); Fantham (2002); Panayotakis (2005); Manuwald (2011) 74; see also Dutsch in this volume.

[79] Cf. Marshall (2006) 131–132; he views the mask as a tool at the disposal of the actor, who, by his acting, may give the character type represented by the mask refreshingly new dimensions.

[80] In the so-called "Charition-mime" (*P.Oxy*. 413) there are indications in abbreviated form of the points at which there ought to be musical accompaniment, and of the moments in the plot where the comic slave ought to fart; see Andreassi (2001) 55, 59, 60, 62, 68, 71, and 73. For surviving stage directions in Greek drama see Taplin (1977b) 15, 371 n. 3; Taplin (1977a); and Handley (2002) 168–169.

if a transmitted text contained no such details, the playwright (and those who may have revised the script after him) usually provided his actors with a minimum of necessary stage-directions incorporated, more or less subtly, into the body of the play. However, we cannot be certain that some comedies did not include in their performance comic stage-business that was *not* signalled by the words, but was nonetheless added by the actor(s) in the form of spontaneous action intended to make the script funnier. Moreover, if the playwright attended the rehearsals for the first performance, he could tell the actors about gestures or comic business that were not in the script. What we *can* say, then, on this matter is that plenty of movements *are* indicated in the text.

Imperial Drama

The subject of Roman theatre design in Italy and the provinces during the Empire has been extensively discussed, both in general terms and with special attention to individual theatre sites, by Bieber (^{2}1961) 190–222 and Sear (2006), who provide clear illustrations and full accounts of the archaeological remains. The large and lavishly decorated buildings of the late Republic and the Empire hosted performances of entirely new plays (the most celebrated example being a new tragedy, *Thyestes*, composed by L. Varius Rufus, and produced in 29 BCE as part of the continuing celebrations for Octavian's victory at Actium), as well as low mimes and tragic pantomimes.[81] Mime (in the form of both an unscripted spectacle and a literary play performed by maskless actors and actresses with bare feet) and pantomime (with its libretto and a chorus accompanying the gestures of a professional masked solo male or female dancer) existed simultaneously and harmoniously in the theatrical culture of Rome in the late Republic and the Empire. Visually, the re-enactment of mythological scenes through the dance of a skilled *pantomimus* ("imitator of everything") must have been a stunning spectacle to watch, and recent scholarship on the topic has done well to focus not only on the visual features of the Roman pantomime (mask, costume, and movements) but also on its significance for, and place within, the rhetorical, sexual, and intertextual discources operating in Italy and the provinces during the first two centuries CE.[82]

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[81] For an overview of the types of plays performed in the theatres of the Empire see Bieber (^{2}1961) 227–253.

[82] Mime from the early Republic to the fifth century CE: Panayotakis (2010) 1–32. Visual features of Imperial pantomime: Jory (1996), Hall (2008c), Webb (2008a), Wyles (2008), Hall in this volume.

In addition to these shows, there were many opportunities to watch a large number of revivals of early Republican comedies (both *fabulae palliatae* and *fabulae togatae*), tragedies, and *fabulae Atellanae*.[83] Some of the revivals were spectacularly and extravagantly staged (for instance, the revival of Afranius' *Incendium* in the Neronian period: Suet. *Nero* 11.2; cf. Suet. *Claud.* 21.6). However, they were the exception to the rule. Public readings (*recitationes*) of literary works, including comedies and tragedies, and stage productions of highlights from them seem to have been what was routinely performed in public theatres and in private venues which were perceived as theatres;[84] perhaps these recitals co-existed with the occasional full-scale production of a revival performance of a Republican script, but we cannot be sure about the frequency of such productions. It is within this social and cultural framework, heavily influenced by the teaching of rhetoric and the display of erudition, that we need to locate and understand Senecan drama and the long-standing debate about its performance and/or performability.

Since Zwierlein's influential and detailed argument that Seneca's plays were designed for recitation, not for performance (see above, p. 19), most but by no means all Senecan scholars have been reluctant to accept, or have straightforwardly rejected the points raised as objections to the argument for the stageability or actual staging of the tragedies in Seneca's time. These objections include the frequent lack of clarity concerning characters' movements and exits/entrances, the fondness for violent scenes that would involve the spilling of blood, the lengthy asides in the presence of characters who remain silent for a long period of time, the detailed description of actions which ought to have been visible to an audience, the power of the words over stage action. The pro-performance thesis was articulated forcefully by Calder (1975), L. Braun (1982), Grimal (1983), and Dihle (1983), and its most comprehensive proponent has been Sutton (1986), who offers a play-by-play theatrical analysis of the Senecan texts as scripts composed for full-scale performance in public theatres, as opposed to smaller theatrical venues, for example the Emperor's residence or large houses owned by upper-class Romans. But the question has remained open, and anyone interested in staging matters in the tragedies of Seneca or in our sole example of a historical play in Latin, the *Octavia*, should also consult recent commentaries on individual tragedies by Seneca. On the whole, the authors

83 The best discussion of revivals of Republican plays in the post-Augustan era is Manuwald (2011) 108–119.

84 Tac. *Dial.* 2–3, 11; Plin. *Ep.* 1.15.2, 3.1.9, 3.7.5, 5.3.2, 6.21.2; Suet. *Cl.* 41.1; Ovid's tragedy, the *Medea*, was not intended for the stage, if we are to believe Ovid, *Tr.* 5.7.27.

of such volumes are more sensitive, in comparison to Plautine and Terentian commentators, to the visual dimension and performance problems of the text they discuss. It is possible to see in their analysis that the debate of Senecan staging is no longer expressed in terms of a clear-cut divide between *either* full-scale performance *or* recitation, and that recitation and stage acting should not be viewed as mutually exclusive cultural activities (one may already deduce this from the testimony of Pliny, *Ep*. 7.17 and 9.34.2).[85]

Sutton's approach was followed by critics who studied the theatricality of individual plays of Seneca (for instance, Kragelund considers issues of dramatic space and scenography in *Phaedra* and *Octavia*), and by a number of Senecan scholars who involved themselves in productions of Senecan plays and subsequently published their experience of the staging process.[86] The most exciting publication in the latter category is a collection of papers (Harrison 2000a) delivered at a two-day conference on the plays of Seneca in 1998 in Cincinnati. The lion's share of the analysis of Senecan staging techniques in the volume is devoted to *Trojan Women*, and this is probably due not only to the theatrical problems this play presents when staged, or to the amount of scholarly attention it has received, but also to the fact that the conference itself was accompanied by a performance of this play, which (we are told) was put on "to test the question of whether the plays were meant for performance or for recitation" (Harrison (2000a) vii).

There is no consensus amongst that volume's contributors about the performance history either of the *Trojan Women* or of Senecan drama as a whole. So, Fantham (2000) continues to argue strongly that Seneca, the playwright who was steeped in rhetorical training, gave priority to language over action in the composition of his plays, which, according to her, were deliberately addressed to the ear and the imagination, rather than the eye. Marshall (2000), in contrast, demonstrates how the difficulties of stage geography in the *Trojan Women* are best resolved by the audience's observation of choral movements, and thus shows that the fluidity of the concept of dramatic space in Seneca is a highly sophisticated code of performance. Fantham's and Marshall's pieces should be read in conjunction with Harrison's (2000b) reconstruction of how he thought Seneca himself had

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85 See the commentaries of Tarrant (1976) 7–8 and (1985) 13–15 (to be read alongside his ground-breaking article of 1978); Fantham (1982); Coffey and Mayer (1990) 15–18; Ferri (2003) 56–61; Boyle (2008) xl–xlii.

86 See Kragelund (1999). The list of Senecan critics who participated in stage productions of Senecan plays and then reported on them is to be found in Fitch (2000) 2; to his list add now Stroh (2008).

staged the *Trojan Women*. Fitch (2000), in an excellent piece, offers a useful summary of the debate on whether Seneca envisaged performance when writing his tragedies. On the whole, Fitch adopts a cautious and sensible approach to the problem by recognising that we need not take the rigid view that *the whole corpus* of Seneca's tragedies was composed *either* for performance *or* for recitation; his comparison of Senecan drama with modern performances of opera and the light that the latter may throw on the staging of the former is especially instructive.[87] In an equally convincing paper Shelton (2000) offers a fascinating discussion of the ways in which the Romans' experience of watching real violence and death in the spectacles of the theatre and the arena conditioned their reception of the *Trojan Women*. On the other hand, Goldberg (2000), who clearly favours recitation over full-scale productions of the tragedies, shifts the angle of the debate, and gives it an aesthetic perspective, because he visualises Seneca as a member of a private, rhetorical, educated, and aristocratic circle of poets, who, by means of their tragedies, deliberately distanced themselves from the crowds that delighted in the vulgarity and cruelty of the mimes, pantomimes, and other popular entertainments staged at the amphitheatre.[88]

III. *An Outline of the Contributions to This Volume*

In light of the preceding survey (however synoptic and selective it inevitably is), we may now proceed to consider, in brief, the chapters in this volume and to appreciate their contribution to the understanding of ancient performance and its ramifications.

Setting the Stage

The volume opens with a section entitled "Opsis, Props, Scene", which includes papers by Grigoris Sifakis and David Konstan. In "The Misunderstanding of *Opsis* in Aristotle's *Poetics*", Sifakis argues against the widespread

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[87] Fitch (2000) 7: "Seneca may have expected or thought it likely that his plays would be performed in excerpts more often than in the full text. So when he composed the plays his imagination became more theatrical in the climactic scenes than elsewhere. I do not mean that Seneca had *no* expectation of performance of the whole text, but only that he had a more lively expectation of performance of individual scenes." Comparison of Seneca and opera: Fitch (2000) 8.

[88] However, it is far from certain that *all* the mimes that were staged in Seneca's era were coarse and void of the literary qualities attested in elevated literary genres, and it is instructive to remember how fond Seneca was of the *sententiae* of the mimographer Publilius.

view that Aristotle was dismissive of theatre production—a position he has defended in a number of recent publications (see n. 4 above). As Sifakis points out, Aristotle fully acknowledges the importance of *opsis* as a necessary part of tragedy, and of performance as the essential actuation of dramatic poetry. Far from prioritizing the written script over performance, Aristotle focuses on the art of dramatic poetry, that is, principally, on the art of plot-construction, rather than expanding his inquiry into the composite art of theatre production or *didaskalia*, which as Sifakis points out was not a τέχνη proper in antiquity (i.e. "a system of principles and interdependent rules organized so as to reflect actual practice and offer potential guidance to performers").[89]

In his "Propping Up Greek Tragedy: The Right Use of *Opsis*", Konstan argues that Aristotle's apparent demotion, in the *Poetics*, of visual effects in tragedy ought not to be construed as an attack against *opsis* in general but rather as a criticism against melodramatic effects (e.g. hideous masks), which generate the pre-cognitive or instinctive response of horror (τὸ τερατῶδες) rather than fear (φόβος, τὸ φοβερόν) in the audience, and as such excite emotions that are not proper to tragedy. The Greek tragedians, Konstan points out, did use stage props and other visual equipment so as to excite pity and fear in the way Aristotle recommends. He then proceeds to illustrate some neglected examples of the right use of visual effects; for instance, the opening scene in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, where the presence of children and elders flanking the mature Oedipus summons up the idea of the ages of man (as in the solution to the riddle of the Sphinx); or the scene from Euripides' *Hippolytus* in which Theseus tears the wreath from his head upon hearing of Phaedra's death (806–807), thereby representing symbolically the destruction of Hippolytus' virginity, especially since it must have recalled the wreath that Hippolytus bears at v. 73.

Stage properties in the ancient theatre have never been the object of a full and systematic treatment. This is not to say, of course, that there have not been studies of the function of props in individual playwrights; on the contrary, there are good surveys of the relevant evidence for Greek tragedy and Aristophanic and Plautine comedy.[90] Still, students of props in Greek or Roman theatre have nothing comparable to, say, the studies in Harris and Korda (2002), which explore the material and symbolic/semiotic dimensions of stage properties in early modern English drama, or to the thorough study

89 Quotation from p. 54.

90 See, for instance, Dingel (1967) and (1971); Ketterer (1986a), (1986b), and (1986c); English (1999), (2000), and (2006/2007); Poe (2000); Marshall (2006) 66–72; Ley (2007b); and Chaston (2010).

of Sofer (2003), which provides a survey of props from medieval to modern theatre and shows how they are often used to question dramatic convention and revitalize theatre practice. As Rob Tordoff remarks in this volume (p. 90), to survey all the ground left untouched by classical scholarship in the matter of stage properties would require no less than a book-length study.

It is apposite, therefore, that this volume includes two papers on ancient Greek stage properties, which provide important insights into this underexplored field. Martin Revermann's "Generalizing about Props: Greek Drama, Comparator Traditions, and the Analysis of Stage Objects" draws on important theoretical approaches, principally theatre semiotics and (to a smaller extent) psychoanalysis, in order to develop a more refined framework for understanding the use of props by ancient playwrights writing for large open-air theatres. Stage properties, Revermann points out, add an element of continuity and durability, as well as being detachable, inanimate objects that are capable of being isolated (physically and conceptually) as distinct elements of dramatic communication and constituents of theatrical meaning. In ancient theatre, props can function as generic pointers: for instance, swords exemplify the genre of tragedy (or of paratragedy, if used in comedy), while an entering character carrying mundane props is peculiar to comedy. At the same time, props are objects laden with symbolic connotations: they have "stories to tell", they are condensed visual narratives, which often allude to alternative narratives or implicitly point to parallel sub-plots. In his quest for a theory of props, Revermann fascinatingly brings to bear comparator traditions, especially Western naturalism and Japanese theatre traditions.

Rob Tordoff's paper on "Actors' Properties in Ancient Greek Drama" ventures a quantitative analysis of Greek theatre properties, cataloguing the props required for (or known to have been used in) the performance of Greek drama, showing to what extent each play utilizes props and what kinds of props are resorted to. Tordoff also grapples with such issues as finding an acceptable definition of "stage property" (a much harder task than it may seem), exploring the function of props from a semiotic point of view, and developing models for determining the "rate of materiality" of each play, i.e. the frequency with which props (but also costume and scenery items) are likely to have been used. His paper is concerned only with the surviving tragedies of Euripides, but since these represent more than half of extant Greek tragedy, his findings may well lead to some general conclusions.[91]

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91 Props are also dealt with in Graham Ley's "Rehearsing Aristophanes" in the third part of the volume.

There follows Penny Small's "Skenographia in Brief", which (despite its modest title) provides a careful and detailed survey of the various uses of *skēnographia*, from its earliest mention in Aristotle's *Poetics*, where it may refer to some sort of painted stage-set (but the passage may be interpolated), to its use in Vitruvius, where it refers to a type of technical architectural drawing. The very meaning and nature of *skēnographia* are in doubt, but Small does an excellent job of sifting through the evidence (both written and material), assessing theories and hypotheses, and clearing away a lot of academic deadwood in the process. One of her paper's attractions is the long section on linear perspective (or rather its absence) in the ancient visual arts. Minimalists will rejoice with Small's conclusion that "we must abandon the idea of any kind of elaborate painted stage 'setting' in Greek or Roman theater" (pp. 127–128).

Greek Tragedy

The next section concerns issues related to the *opsis* of tragedy. In "Aeschylean *Opsis*" Anthony Podlecki takes as his starting point the ancient information that Aeschylus had earned for himself a reputation for stunning visual effects. He then looks for examples of *opsis* (in the narrower designation of that term, "scenic effects") in all of the extant tragedies by Aeschylus, as well as in what can be gleaned from the titles and fragments. This is a comprehensive investigation that explores the evidence for, among other things, the use of supernumeraries, masks, costumes, and choreography by Aeschylus. Podlecki also offers insights into the famous Aeschylean silences, as well as into Aeschylus' use of terrifying sights such as monsters and ghosts.

Geoff Bakewell's "Theatricality and Voting in *Eumenides*" focuses on one of the most important scenes in the *Oresteia*, namely the casting of ballots at *Eumenides* 711–753. Throughout the first two plays of the trilogy, characters seeking vengeance have used legal language to justify their claims. At *Agamemnon* 810–818, for instance, the Greek king likens the destruction of Troy to the outcome of a trial conducted by the gods. In typically Aeschylean fashion, what was originally metaphorical becomes visible on stage later on. And yet there are significant contrasts between the two trials, with the later, actual one bearing a greater resemblance to the dikastic proceedings with which the Athenian spectators were familiar. The ballot Athena holds and casts at lines 734–735 is highlighted by the deictic τήνδ' and serves as a focalizer for the *dikē* dispensed in *Eumenides*. As such, this prop deserves recognition alongside the trilogy's other prominent carriers of meaning. In particular, Bakewell argues, the ballot stands for an approach to Justice rooted in rules,

oaths, and Πειθώ, rather than the δόλος and βία represented visually by the robe employed by Clytemnestra and the sword wielded by Orestes earlier in the trilogy.

Peter Meineck's perceptive chapter on "Under Athena's Gaze: Aeschylus' *Eumenides* and the Topography of *Opsis*" explores the significance of the physical surroundings of the theatre space for the audience's reception of stage action. In the open-air Theatre of Dionysus, spectators were offered a dual visual experience as their collective gaze was focused not only on the performance area and on each other, but also on actual sites of ritual, political and social significance within their own city. Meineck discusses how Athenian drama relied heavily on extra-textual visual references that situated the on-stage representations of mythic and, more often than not, foreign plot-lines firmly within the contemporary physical environment of fifth-century Athens.

Rosie Wyles, in her "Heracles' Costume from Euripides' *Heracles* to Pantomime Performance", examines the theatrical reception of Euripides' *Heracles* in the Graeco-Roman world. The starting point is the premiere of this play in Athens *c.* 415 BC and the end point is in the pantomime performances of the Roman Empire. The performance history of this play is traced through the theatrical journey of one of its key visual symbols: Heracles' costume. An iconic object, it becomes (as Wyles argues) a key symbol within theatrical discourse, so much so that the exploration of its "stage life" through antiquity—on the basis of a wide range of evidence, from play scripts through inscriptions to iconographic evidence—is also an examination of attitudes towards theatre as a performance art within Greek and Roman culture.

Judith Fletcher's paper "Weapons of Friendship: Props in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and *Ajax*" explores the semiotic weight borne by two significant props: Philoctetes' bow and Ajax's sword. Each weapon brings to the stage a narrative history that is implicated in themes of friendship and isolation. Both items are weapons and yet, paradoxically, relate to the reciprocal economies of aristocratic exchange and gift-giving: they are supposed to consolidate amiable relations, yet they both function as a means of separating the hero from society. At the same time, they are associated not only with Philoctetes and Ajax but also (through the narratives they embody) with the spectral presence of Heracles and Hector, both of them dead, yet both of them haunting the respective dramas and adding special meaning to the two all-important props.

Robert Ketterer's paper "*Skēnē*, Altar and Image in Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians*" examines how physical properties contribute to the novel character of Euripides' play. He focuses on the *skēnē* building that

represents Artemis' sanctuary, on the altar for human sacrifices that stands in front of the *skēnē*, and on the statue of Artemis that Iphigenia brings out of the *skēnē* at a climactic moment. All of these physical items are associated with human sacrifice, and all of them are endowed with shifting significations that are established and then modified. Beyond physical objects, a factor of special importance for this gradual acquisition of meaning is the presence of the Black Sea, which lies unseen near Artemis's temple (1196): the verbal descriptions of the sea and seashore combine with the visual properties to create a larger imaginative set, and creates a numinous atmosphere both of impending doom and of potential for creation, since it is at the seashore that Iphigenia performs a (devised) purification ritual that secures the Greeks' escape. Insofar as it suggests the eventual cleansing of Orestes' blood-guilt, the Black Sea also supplies subliminally a preparation for the sudden appearance of Athena as a *dea ex machina*.

Vayos Liapis' "Staging *Rhesus*" draws attention to issues of staging arising from the problematic *Rhesus*. The play's author introduces more speaking characters than he knows what to do with, inserts spectacular scenes for spectacle's sake with little concern for coherence, employs (in all likelihood) a fourth actor for the role of Alexander, a part that is however dramatically redundant, and even presents an onstage transformation of one divinity (Athena) into another (Aphrodite, of all goddesses), for which there is no precedent or parallel in serious literature. Despite these and other obvious faults of dramaturgy and plot-construction, *Rhesus* is a treasure-trove of information on fourth-century theatre performance, and an extremely interesting piece of work from a visual point of view. For instance, it takes place almost in its entirety at dead of night, which means that the playwright has to go into the extra trouble of conveying a sense of surrounding darkness at a daytime performance. It probably has no use for the *skēnē*-building, and the entire action probably takes place in the orchestra—an arrangement unparalleled in Greek tragedy after early Aeschylus, and no doubt an instance of deliberate archaism in stagecraft. In other respects, too, *Rhesus* seems keen on reviving long-forgotten theatrical practices, e.g. in the anapaestic opening by the chorus or in Hector's role as the stationary recipient of a series of messenger narratives, reminiscent of Eteocles in Aeschylus' *Seven*.

Greek Comedy

Comic *opsis* is an extremely fertile field of study, and a number of papers in this volume explore various aspects of comic visual techniques. This section is ushered in by Toph Marshall's paper "Three Actors in Old Comedy, Again",

which revisits the question of the number of actors in Old Comedy, arguing for a hard limit of three actors, as had been the case in contemporary tragedy. This supports the case of MacDowell (1994) against the consensus that a "soft" limit was in place (i.e., that occasional "extra" actors were sometimes used), but also adopts the lower limit of three advocated by Marshall (1997) against MacDowell's limit of four. The importance of this question bears on a number of larger issues concerning the nature of the Aristophanic text, the purpose of competition regulations, and the demands placed on comic actors in the fifth century. Further, it is argued that the use of three actors in *Birds* (414 BCE) yields interpretative benefits absent from the audience's understanding of the play if more had been used.

The next paper is Jeffrey Rusten's "'The Odeion on his Head': Costume and Identity in Cratinus' *Thracian Women* fr. 73, and Cratinus' Techniques of Political Satire". The paper's point of departure is a fragment from Cratinus' *Thracian Women* (*PCG* fr. 73), noting a detail of costume which turns out to be highly significant for that author's methodology of political satire: "Here comes Zeus the onion-headed, / Pericles, with the Odeion on top of his head, / now that the vote on ostracism is past." Rusten challenges the unanimous assumption that the wearer of this remarkable headgear was Pericles, and invokes artistic evidence to suggest that the reference here is to Zeus, whose comic mask is shown to wear a *polos* on Southern Italian and Attic vases. Accordingly, Ο ΠΕΡΙΚΛΕΗΣ ought to be taken not as a proper name (ὁ Περικλέης) but as an adjective, ὁ περικλεής, "most glorious". That in this fragment a god is described in language that recalls Pericles would not be surprising since it would conform to Cratinus' practice in *Dionsyalexandros* and *Ploutoi*.

Finally, in "Rehearsing Aristophanes", Graham Ley takes on a little-studied aspect of ancient performance, namely rehearsal, in particular in relation to the use of stage properties in Aristophanic comedy. In contrast to the aesthetic economy of Greek tragedy, Aristophanic comedy is lavish in its use of properties and the material aspects of theatricality. Aristophanic stage properties tend to be seen as temporary instrumental objects, their abundance simply servicing the joke-of-the-moment, in contrast to the symbolic value invested in isolated tragic properties, whose significance may resonate throughout the play. There are, however, many aspects of the more complex theatricality of comedy that call for attention. The central question is how performances of this kind were prepared: how essential to the formation of the spoken script are the properties and other elements of theatricality in Aristophanic comedy? Is it possible to build up a picture of the process of preparation that led to a performance of

an Aristophanic comedy, one that may stretch behind what we would in modern terms call rehearsal, and which would demonstrably have to include it, as well as the relationship between actors, script-writer, producer, and stage-manager (the person who provided the properties, whether found or made)?

Rome and Empire

Robert Cowan, in "Haven't I Seen You Before Somewhere? Optical Allusions in Republican Tragedy", examines theoretical and methodological problems concerning "visual intertextuality", that is, the ways in which visual configurations in one play may allude to similar details of stagecraft in an earlier play. As Cowan convincingly shows, this peculiar sort of intertextuality (or should we say "intervisuality"?) is part of a nexus of strategies whereby Roman playwrights negotiate their complex relationship—one of appropriation, adaptation, and transformation—with their Greek originals, and also with classical plays by earlier Roman dramatists. Through a careful and intelligent examination of particular instances, Cowan shows that it is typical of the comic genre to allude visually to plays *qua* plays—to the *mimesis* of the *praxis* rather than the *praxis* itself—, whereas tragic allusion is much less self-conscious, bolstering visual references with non-visual (especially thematic) connections between the alluding play and the play alluded to. Especially rewarding is the discussion of "cross-modal" allusion, in which verbal descriptions recall stage action or imagery.

George Fredric Franko in "*Anicius vortit barbare*: The Scenic Games of L. Anicius Gallus and the Aesthetics of Greek and Roman Performance" gives us a re-examination of the victory celebrations held in 167 BCE by the Roman general L. Anicius Gallus. Anicius constructed a huge stage in the Circus Maximus and placed upon it some of the most famous Greek musicians, dancers, and actors. After the performance began, Anicius directed the artists to stage a bizarre mock battle, to the overwhelming delight of the spectators. This seemingly unscripted and barbarous perversion of Greek modes of performance by Roman hands offers, Franko argues, a good starting point for comparing Greek and Roman New Comic aesthetics. One may well wonder to what extent Anicius' manipulation of the players—which shocked at least one Greek spectator, the historian Polybius—echoes the ways in which Plautus and other authors of Roman comedy adapted the work of their Greek predecessors. In point of fact, Franko argues, the pervasive Plautine portrayal of the clever slave as both general and impresario provides a theatrical precedent for Anicius' behaviour: the general may actually have

intended his triumph to be a farcical, quasi-Plautine barbarization of Greek culture, much as Plautine comedy self-consciously drew attention to its Greek ancestry only to thumb its nose at it.

The central role of spectacular entertainments in Roman culture is a major topic in Richard Beacham's fascinating paper "*Otium, Opulentia* and *Opsis*: Setting, Performance and Perception within the *mise-en-scène* of the Roman House". Beacham sets out to explore theatricality and theatricalism in the Roman house as an important intersection of private and public realms, both of which often co-existed as complementary spaces and activities in the homes of prominent Romans. His paper also brings to bear the hugely important contribution that emerging virtual technologies are making to our capacity to evoke, examine, and understand such dynamic elements as time, movement, spatial organisation, the arrangement and modification of fields of vision, and the incremental perception and experience of different meaningful and carefully "staged" images unfolding to visitors or residents as they made their way variously through the "public" and "private" spaces of the house. Such visitors are likely to have been conditioned in their perception and influenced in their understanding of domestic décor and environments through their direct experience of the pervasive range of public spectacles, modes of display, and entertainments at hand in public venues.

Dorota Dutsch, in "Towards a Roman Theory of Theatrical Gesture", asks the question: how much is known about the gestures made onstage by Roman actors? In his *Institutio* (11.3.85–88), Quintilian divides all gestures into "imitative" and "natural," with natural gestures forming a symbolic code comparable to spoken language. This language of gesture would have included hand movements equivalent to adverbs, pronouns, nouns, and verbs. Such symbolic gestures, spontaneously accompanying words, were the only ones that Quintilian recommended for the orator. The actor's gestures, dependent as they were on the lines spoken—and not on the actor's thoughts and feelings—could not be spontaneous. The gestures made on stage were imitative of the various categories of the natural (i.e. symbolic) gestures, or of actions of everyday life.

Antonis Petrides' "Lucian's *On Dance* and the Poetics of the Pantomime Mask" sifts through the arguments made by the character Lycinus in Lucian's dialogue, especially as regards the difference between the masks of pantomime and postclassical tragedy. It transpires that Lycinus' discourse is whimsical and ideologically refracted: it pivots on a number of discursive strategies designed to elevate and ennoble the novel art of pantomime over the degenerating tragedy of his day. Among these strategies, primary (but so far unnoticed) is Lycinus' paradoxical attempt to construe pantomime, a

form of dramatic dance crystallized in the age of Augustus, as a classicizing genre. In the comparison between the oversized, overwhelming mask of Imperial tragedy and the proportionate, decorous mask of pantomime, the latter emerges as a continuator of the aesthetics of the classical mask, with its malleably expressionless features on which the actor in performance could inscribe a whole range of emotions. Although no single evolutionary line connects pantomime to classical tragedy (despite Lycinus' playful classicizing constructions), the two genres do seem to have reached similar "sculptural" solutions while catering to similar semiotic needs.

Edith Hall's "Pantomime: Visualising Myth in the Roman Empire" is a brief history (based on Hall 2008) of pantomime performance. Among other things, Hall shows that pantomime is a descendant of Greek tragic theatre, insofar as its narratives were often drawn from the tragic repertoire, and its aesthetic appeal and emotive function had explicit affinities with the tragic genre. Pantomime, in its turn, seems to have exerted a profound influence—through its gestural codes and mimetic patterns—on other types of cultural practice and discourse, such as rhetorical declamation or the decorative arts. It was the principal agent of mythological instruction for the masses, and it kept alive the prestigious tradition of classical tragedy, though by means of a different, new medium. In an impressive synthesis, Hall deploys evidence ranging from literary to epigraphic to archaeological sources to reconstruct the status, image, performance context and theatrical milieu of ancient pantomime dancers.

Integrating Opsis

This final section concerns ways in which non-theatre arts or elements are integrated into the *opsis* of theatrical performance. It is also related to modern receptions and perceptions of visuality in relation to the staging and performance of tragedy.

George Kovacs in "Stringed Instruments in Fifth-Century Drama" points out that the complex polarity between *lyra* and *aulos* in classical Athens (with Athenians privileging the former over the latter, socially and aesthetically) was inverted on the stage: it is the *aulos* that was the primary instrument in these most prestigious and public events. The sound volume of the *auloi* and their connection to Dionysus through the satyr Marsyas seem to have made it an ideal instrument for dramatic performance. The *lyra* must have been difficult in presentation and was used sparingly. There is, however, some evidence for the use of the *lyra* on stage, especially where it had thematic relevance in the play, either as a plot device or as a defining feature of a

specific character. Kovacs further argues that, when used onstage in tragedy, *lyrai* appeared in the form of a traditional "tortoise-shell" (*chelys*) *lyra* and were accompanied by an offstage professional playing a concert *kithara* ("box" *lyra*).

With Gonda Van Steen's paper "Bloody (Stage) Business: Matthias Langhoff's *Sparagmos* of Euripides' *Bacchae* (1997)" we move to the rapidly developing field of reception studies. The 1997 production of Euripides' *Bacchae* by the Swiss-born director Matthias Langhoff caused an outcry in Greece. With a naked Dionysus, a French actress who butchered the modern Greek words, and a city of Thebes that resembled a drab provincial town, the production shocked Greek audiences and critics alike. Van Steen uses Langhoff's production as a case-study of modernization that was perceived to be consuming itself in the bold stage business of the director's *opsis*. Her paper analyses the relationship between *opsis* and immediate reception and examines the various visual choices that Langhoff made and that, in Greek eyes, seemed to distort the original text, taint the "sacred" ancient setting of Epidaurus, and subvert the long-standing prestige of a state-sponsored theatre company, the State Theatre of Northern Greece.

This section, as well as the volume itself, is rounded off by Fiona Macintosh's engrossing paper "From Sculpture to Vase-painting: Archaeological Models for the Actor". Star actors from the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, most notably Jean Mounet-Sully and Sarah Bernhardt, turned to classical sculptures and vase-paintings for guidance on their own patterned movements and gestures in their interpretation of classical roles. These outstanding French actors were both sculptors and were both understood to "self-sculpt" as they performed on the stage. In this sense, they represent the culmination and the end of a long tradition in European theatre history, in which the theatrical ideal was classical and essentially sculptural. The sculptural ideal involved a fixity of stance—an "attitude", a marmorial appearance—and grew out of two concurrent influences: Winkelmann's (and later Schlegel's) obsession with sculpture as the supreme art form, and the predominance of the proscenium arch theatre.

The present volume is the outcome of a collaborative effort that lasted several years. Its origins may be traced back to George W.M. Harrison's plan, in the summer of 2006, to hold a conference on the *opsis* of ancient theatre. This turned out to be unfeasible owing to practical reasons, but it soon became clear that the project could (and should) grow into an edited volume. The editors wish to thank the contributors to this volume not only for their exemplary cooperativeness but also (and principally) for their thoughtful and

thought-provoking papers. No attempt has been made towards consistency in transliterations, either of ancient or of modern Greek words and names, as we decided to respect authors' choices in this matter. Also, we have refrained from consistently adopting British over American spellings (or vice versa), since this would imply a degree of cultural imperialism or parochialism, which we feel ought to be alien to scholarly endeavours.

The editors wish to thank Caroline van Erp and Peter Buschman for their invaluable assistance during the production of this volume. Thanks are also due to an anonymous reader for Brill, whose suggestions helped improve this volume.

OPSIS, PROPS, SCENE

THE MISUNDERSTANDING OF *OPSIS* IN ARISTOTLE'S *POETICS*[*]

G.M. Sifakis

When Gilbert Murray wrote, more than ninety years ago,[1] that "even to accomplished scholars the meaning [of the *Poetics*] is often obscure, as may be seen … by a study of the long series of misunderstandings and overstatements and corrections which form the history of the *Poetics* since the Renaissance" he surely did not expect things to change for the better any time soon. His pronouncement would be equally valid today in the face of a flood of publications—editions, translations, commentaries, monographs, and the like—which appeared in the second half of the 20th century and steadily continue to come out in the 21st.[2] It seems as if new contributions to the study of that short work, which Aristotle produced late in his career, do very little to lighten an already overcast landscape.

This can hardly be blamed on the author, whose style is plain, unembellished, and by and large lucid, even if it can at times be elliptical and syntactically complex. The treatise on the art of poetry also contains several allusions or direct references to his other works, which ought to help understand it, had they not often been ignored as earlier, irrelevant or incompatible with the argument of the *Poetics* (such inconsistencies—it has been suggested more than once—should not be considered a problem because even a philosopher is supposedly entitled to change his mind). However, centuries of studying and interpreting Aristotle's work have resulted, on the one hand, in a great variety of widely differing interpretations—as to what, for instance, is the meaning of the *katharsis* brought about by tragedy—and, on the other hand, in misunderstandings firmly established by unreflective repetition.

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[*] I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Stavros Tsitsiridis for his assistance in the preparation of this paper, and to Prof. Vayos Liapis for his editorial comments.

[1] In his Preface to Ingram Bywater's translation of *Poetics* (1920, repr. 1967) 4.

[2] Listed up to 1996 by Schrier (1998), and then by Malcolm Heath in his ongoing bibliography over the Internet: http://www.leeds.ac.uk/classics/resources/poetics/poetbib.htm.

Aristotle in Conflict with Himself?

One such well-entrenched notion is the often repeated or implied assumption, shared by Aristotelians as well as by historians of drama, that Aristotle did not care about and actually underestimated the theatrical performance of tragedy. The basis of this assumption is the apparent contradiction between the inclusion of *opsis*—whether it is taken to mean 'spectacle' or the appearance of the actors—in the six qualitative or formative parts of tragedy (*Poet.* ch. 6, 1449b31–32) and the fact that a little later, in the same chapter, *opsis* is called *atechnotaton* (totally nontechnical) and unrelated to the art of poetry. This statement is further qualified by Aristotle's assertion that the potential of tragedy exists even without performance and actors, not to say that as far as the execution of the visual aspects of performance is concerned "the art of the mask-maker is more essential than the art of the poets" (1450b16–20).

It would be superfluous to try to sketch here even a partial history of the discussions the above passages have given rise to, and so I'll cite only two characteristic, recent examples: Oliver Taplin's severe criticism of Aristotle as a theoretician of drama, and Stephen Halliwell's much more considerate effort to make sense of those conflicting passages.

A specialist in Aristotelian poetics as well as in Greek drama, Halliwell points out that "Aristotle includes *opsis* as a necessary part of tragedy (and the same would certainly hold for comedy): 49b31–33, 50a9f. By doing so he appears to envisage performance as the appropriate and essential embodiment of dramatic poetry. The point is confirmed by several later passages: in ch. 17, 55a22–32, where Aristotle urges the composing dramatist to visualise his scene as vividly as possible (…) in ch. 24, 59b24–26 (…) and in ch. 24, 60a14."[3] Furthermore, he calls the criticism "that Aristotle was insensitive to the visual experience of dramatic performance [a] *slur* [my emphasis] difficult to sustain, provided we do not expect the effusions of the theatre-critic from the philosopher (Aristotle's taste is very discreet)."[4] However, he recognizes that "there is indeed an [uneliminable] equivocation to be discerned in Aristotle's attitude to drama in the theatre"[5] and attributes "this instability in Aristotle's position" to a number of factors, including the gradual break-up in the fourth century "of an older convention by which dramatists had been directly involved (even sometimes as actors) in the

3 Halliwell (1998) 339–340. On *Poet.* ch. 17 see pp. 59–60 below.
4 Halliwell (1998) 341.
5 Halliwell (1998) 337 (with 342).

productions of their own plays," "the establishment of the independent 'producer' and the clearer demarcation of his and the poet's functions," "the growing availability of dramatic texts" and so forth.[6]

On the other hand, Taplin, an expert in the performative aspects of Greek drama, sees the *Poetics* as a kind of "manifesto (…) of proto-Derridean elevation of text over speech" because, having included *opsis* among the six elements of tragedy, Aristotle "then goes on to dismiss it as 'emotionally powerful, but the least integral element of all for the poetic art. For the potential of tragedy exists without public performance and actors; and, besides, the art of the designer is more essential than the poet's for the carrying through of visual effects' [*Poet.* 6, 1450b17–21]."[7] He then goes on to criticize what he calls "Aristotle's failure to specify a proper *theatron* (watching-place) for theatre is the product not only of his fixation with this new-fangled 'reading,' but also of his critical classification of tragedy and comedy within the genus '*poietike*' (poetic) along with, above all, epic, which arguably does not require any such space (I'm not sure even about that). It might all have been different if only he had classified tragedy with 'spectator sports,' above all the athletic contests so characteristic of ancient Greece—or even possibly with 'spectator politics,' such as the democratic assembly and the law-courts of Athens. (…) Furthermore, Aristotle tries to break the hermeneutic circle that is my arena today:[8] for him, it seems, the script has primacy over enactment; it is valid without even the possibility of performance."[9]

I am afraid I cannot follow—let alone challenge—Professor Taplin in his arena of the hermeneutic circle which Aristotle tries to break by classifying tragedy under the genus of poetic art (along with epic) because he purportedly disregarded or perhaps even ignored that "drama is perfectly possible without the written script; and that a script without any space or occasion for performance, past or future, is not drama, but some other poetic form under the influence of drama."[10] For my part, being a devotee of folk music and jazz, as well as of the improvisational style of Italian comedy, the modern Greek and Oriental shadow-puppets, and other forms of traditional arts, I could not

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6 Halliwell (1998) 342–343.

7 Taplin (1995) 94–95. Taplin's criticism of Aristotle goes back a long way, see Taplin (1977b) 477.

8 Taplin's paper was delivered as the F.W. Bateson Memorial Lecture in Oxford, on 15 February 1995.

9 Taplin (1995) 95.

10 Taplin (1995) 96.

but agree with Taplin's aforementioned statement. And surely I cannot deny the obvious, namely, that Aristotle clearly states that "the potential of tragedy exists without public performance and actors." Whether this statement can be taken as evidence for Aristotle's "fixation with this new-fangled 'reading'," is another matter, as is the question whether it amounts to a dismissal of theatre production on his part. For we have to remember that the theoretician we are talking about was the original annalist of Athenian theatre, and author of *Productions* (Διδασκαλίαι) and *Dionysiac Victories* (as well as *On Tragedies*) on which all work about the history of drama was based in antiquity.[11] Moreover, we have to ask: should or could Aristotle classify tragedy, not with epic as a species of poetry, but with "spectator sports" or "spectator politics," with genera, that is, which he should have to invent for the purpose? After all the dramatists called themselves poets,[12] as did all other authors who consistently speak of the dramatists as poets throughout antiquity.

The crucial question, however, is not whether Aristotle underestimated theatrical performance, but whether he really made two opposing statements within the limits of the same chapter of his short work. This is what is really at stake, regardless of whether one addresses the problem with respect for the philosopher, as Halliwell does, or with Taplin's critical attitude.[13]

What Does the Text of Poetics *Ch. 6 Really Say?*

It is now time to take a closer look at Aristotle's relevant texts. In *Poet.* 6, he enumerates three times the six qualitative components or "formative elements" (Bywater) of tragedy: (*a*) Right after the definition of tragedy (beginning of ch. 6) and the explanation of the strange (for us) metaphor of "seasoned language" used in the preceding definition,[14] the six qualitative parts (μέρη, μόρια, εἴδη) that are derived from it and "make tragedy what it is,"[15] or "determine its quality" (Butcher), are introduced and sketchily defined (1449b31–50a7). In this enumeration, *opsis* is listed first "because, since they

[11] Diogenes Laertius 5.26. 24–26. Fragments of *Didaskaliai*: 8.48.618–629 Rose; see Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 70–71.

[12] To quote Aristophanes alone: *Ach.* 633, *Eq.* 509, 584, *Nu.* 545, 1366, *Pax* 534, 798, *Av.* 916, 934, 947, *Lys.* 149, *Ran.* 84, 858, 1008, 1055, 418, 1528.

[13] Who, I guess, could hardly subscribe to Scaliger's designation of Aristotle as "imperator noster, omnium bonarum artium dictator perpetuus"!

[14] The same metaphor had already been used by Plato: ἡδυσμένην μοῦσαν (*Rep.* 607a5).

[15] ἀνάγκη οὖν πάσης τραγῳδίας μέρη εἶναι ἕξ, καθ' ὃ ποιά τις ἐστὶν ἡ τραγῳδία (1450a8).

[the tragedians][16] carry out the imitation by acting (πράττοντες), it follows, in the first place, that the arrangement of the spectacle (ὁ τῆς ὄψεως κόσμος) is necessarily a part of tragedy; next, song composition (μελοποιία) and diction (λέξις), for these are the means by which imitation is carried out" (1449b31–34).[17] Then come the three parts that constitute the object of representation (μῦθος/plot, ἤθη/characters, διάνοια/thought).

(*b*) In a recapitulation, the six parts are listed in no particular order, followed by a classification according to their combination and function in the construction of a play and its performance: "these (six parts) are plot and characters and diction and thought and spectacle and song composition. For the means by which they imitate are two [diction and song composition], the manner in which they effect the imitation, one [spectacle], and what they imitate, three [plot, characters, and thought]; there is nothing else besides these" (50a9–12). Up to this point, *opsis* is spoken of as an indispensable formative element: in the definition of tragedy, it is through enactment, not through narrative (δρώντων [sc. τῶν μιμουμένων] καὶ οὐ δι' ἀπαγγελίας) that imitation is carried out (49b26),[18] which is then said to be the reason why the *arrangement of the spectacle* has to be a qualitative part of tragedy (49b31); finally, *opsis* is explicitly indicated as the sole manner in which representation is effected in the performance of tragedy (50a11).

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16 The missing subject here is, strictly speaking, οἱ μιμούμενοι, those who imitate, variously understood as persons/people who imitate by acting, actors, poets effecting the imitation by those who act, and so forth. The crucial question, however, is whether to accept that Aristotle implies performers who carry out the imitation by acting (*prattontes* is a participle of manner), or poets effecting imitation through persons (i.e. dramatic characters) who act. To answer this question we have to take into account that poets are repeatedly the subject of *mimeisthai* (imitate) in *Poetics* (1448a1, 26 and, I believe, 29), and that the participles *prattontes* and *drōntes* are the objects of the same verb (at 48a1, 23, 27, 29) or refer to characters (49b37, 50b4, 60a14). I think, therefore, that Aristotle is intentionally nonspecific in this passage, and for this reason I suggest "tragedians" (actually, an epexegesis of *mimoumenoi*) as the subject of ποιοῦνται τὴν μίμησιν, "carry out the imitation," since this term signifies in English both writers and actors, as does its ancient equivalent, *tragōidoi* (actually, the Greek term is even more generic, and includes 'tragic performances' and 'contests'). See also n. 18 below.

17 All unattributed translations are my own literal renderings of Aristotle's text.

18 On this part of the definition, see Tsitsiridis (2010) 33–34, who points out that if actors are to be understood as the subject of *drōntōn* at 49b26 (as in Heath's translation: "performed by actors, not through narration," [1996] 10) and of the synonymous participle *prattontes* a few lines below (49b31) Aristotle cannot be blamed for undervaluing performance. For my part, I do concur with this conclusion, but would hesitate to accept an explicit reference to actors in the definition of tragedy (see n. 16 above). The participle *drōntōn* is an absolute genitive of manner (qualifying περαίνουσα) which means precisely *by enactment* and stands in direct contrast to narration. For a similar construction cf. Arist. *Athen. Constit.* 18.2.9, where μετεχόντων πολλῶν means "*in conjunction with* a number of confederates" (tr. Kenyon [1984] 2352).

(*c*) In the third and last enumeration, the parts are ranked in order of importance on the basis of their contribution to the τέλος (end, aim, purpose) and ἔργον (work, job, function) of tragedy (50a15–50b20). The three parts corresponding to the object of imitation—plot, characters, thought, in that order—come first, the parts corresponding to the means of imitation—diction, song composition—follow, and spectacle, the part corresponding to the manner of imitation, is placed last. What is remarkable at first sight is not that *opsis* gets the lowest ranking, but the fact that, in a discussion of the qualitative elements of tragedy as a poetic genre, language is ranked fourth (50b12). This kind of evaluation may be difficult for a modern reader of poetry to appreciate, but we have to recall the very beginning of *Poetics*, in which Aristotle announces that he will discuss the poetic art and its kinds, "and how *the plots should be constructed* if the poetry is to be well accomplished" (47a9). There follows his fundamental statement to the effect that all kinds of poetry, as well as music and other arts, are imitations differing from each other in the objects each art represents, and in the means and manner it employs in order to accomplish its purpose. So, when we later reach the definition of tragedy and the discussion of its parts, we should not be surprised by their evaluation and ranking: "the most important of these (parts) is the structure of things; for tragedy is an imitation, not of people, but of actions and life (…) therefore the incidents and the plot are the aim of tragedy, and the aim is the greatest thing of all" (50a15, 23).[19] Plot is thus equated with the purpose of tragedy—to which we will return below—and raised to the highest level of importance as far as the composition of a play is concerned—at the expense, it would seem, of characters: for "there could be no tragedy without action, whereas there could be (a tragedy) without characters, which is the case with the plays of most modern poets whose tragedies are characterless" (50a24–25). Yet, this statement does not underestimate *ēthē* (or *dianoia* for that matter). The reason why *ēthē*, while being the second most important part, is unequivocally ranked below the plot is because tragedy dealt with traditional myths in which things were set in motion by the will of gods, with which the human characters tried to cope; the latter, however, did not instigate the action as they normally do in modern drama.

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[19] "And the end is everywhere the chief thing" is Bywater's freer translation (in Barnes [1984] 2. 2321). Rostagni (1945), in his commentary, usefully refers to the conclusion of the definition of tragedy (περαίνουσα) and to the definition of *telos* in *Metaphysics* 994b9–16, where we read: "ἕνεκα γάρ τινος ἀεὶ πράττει ὅ γε νοῦν ἔχων, τοῦτο δέ ἐστι πέρας· τὸ γὰρ τέλος πέρας ἐστίν (the reasonable man, at least, always acts for a purpose; and this is a limit, for the end is a limit)" (15–16, tr. Ross).

The stories represented by tragedy may have been traditional, but tragedy as a dramatic genre had moved away from its ritual/oral beginnings and evolved at a fast pace, alongside prose and the visual arts, to become the best kind of *poetry*—superior to epic, as Aristotle argues in the last chapter of his treatise—and the most characteristic art form of Classical Athens. Clearly, the poetic masterpieces of the great tragedians were not 'scripts' for actors to display their skills like the 'scenarios' of the Commedia dell'arte, or the 'sequences' (*dan*) of Noh drama in which actors perform long typical routines. On the other hand, the proper *means* of imitation in tragedy are language and music, *lexis* and *melopoiia*, just as they are in Shakespeare and by analogy—through a different writing code—in Western classical music, where there is no scope for improvisation. Such compositions, intended as they are for performance—whether dramatic or musical—, are completed by their authors and given their final shape in and by writing, before they are performed. This is why they outlive their creators and in some cases achieve immortality.

For the same reason, because the dramatist's work begins with the conception of an action (*praxis*) to be represented (or dramatized) and ends with the composition of the verses to be spoken, delivered in recitative, or sung, Aristotle states that "the potential of tragedy exists without public performance and actors" (50b18). Now the *potential* may not always be the same thing as the actual effect that the reading of a play might have on the reader, and Aristotle knew very well that there was no reading public as such in antiquity, at least outside the philosophical schools. So to criticize him for an alleged "fixation with this new-fangled 'reading'" (see p. 47 above) is rather unfortunate since it can hardly be substantiated.[20] Besides, his estimate about tragedy's retaining its potential for readers was dead right, or the great plays would not have continued to be read and treasured thousands of years after their creation.

Still, the above statement and its complement about the art of the mask-maker have to be harmonized with Aristotle's earlier inclusion of *opsis* in the limited number of formative elements that determine the quality of tragedy. In order to resolve this apparent inconsistency we, first, have to pay close attention to Aristotle's terminology.

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20 See Sifakis (2002) 157, n. 23.

The Present and the Missing Terms

To begin with, "*the arrangement* (or even *the universe*) *of the spectacle*" (ὁ τῆς ὄψεως κόσμος) is mentioned in the first enumeration (see pp. 48–49 above) because it necessarily (ἐξ ἀνάγκης) would be a part of tragedy since tragic imitation is carried out by enactment; whereas so far as the *execution of the visual aspects of performance* is concerned the art of the mask-maker is more decisive than the art of the poets (κυριωτέρα περὶ τὴν ἀπεργασίαν τῶν ὄψεων ἡ τοῦ σκευοποιοῦ τέχνη τῆς τῶν ποιητῶν ἐστιν [50b19–20]). It seems to me safe to assume that the latter—i.e. *opseis* in the plural, mentioned in conjunction with the art or craft of the *skeuopoios* (chiefly mask-maker)[21]—refers primarily to *prosōpa* / masks (and secondarily to costumes, sets and stage-properties), whereas the arrangement or universe of the spectacle can be taken to refer to theatre production as a whole, perhaps including acting, delivery and movement. Between the two, *opsis* (in the singular) seems like a generic term for 'spectacle.'[22]

The execution of the visual aspects is credited to the art of the mask-maker, which is clearly stated to be distinct from, and unrelated to, the art of the

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21 Because masks were called σκεύη (implements) in the sense of tools of an actor's trade, just as the leather- and cardboard-puppets of a Karagiozis player are called ἐργαλεῖα (tools) of his trade (the shadow-puppets term corresponding to *prosōpa* is 'figures' / *figoúres*).

22 What Aristotle means by *opsis* is a popular topic for speculation that I do not intend to review here. There is, however, a significant Byzantine text that needs to be mentioned: an anonymous short treatise *On tragedy* (Περὶ τραγῳδίας), in the form of an epistolary essay, published by the late Robert Browning in 1963 (67–81; reprinted by Perusino [1993] 26–32). Browning tentatively attributed it to Michael Psellos (the 11th-century historian, philosopher and polymath); but regardless of the uncertainty of its authorship the treatise draws on a source that most likely goes back to late antiquity. It shows awareness of Aristotle's *Poetics*, but attempts to improve on it by offering a different list of constituent parts of tragedy right from its beginning: "Ἡ τραγῳδία, περὶ ἧς ἠρώτησας, ὑποκείμενα μὲν ἔχει, ἃ δὴ καὶ μιμεῖται, πάθη τε καὶ πράξεις, ὁποῖα τὰ ἑκάτερα. οἷς δὲ μιμεῖται μῦθος, διάνοια, λέξις, μέτρον, ῥυθμός, μέλος, καὶ ἔτι πρὸς τούτοις αἱ ὄψεις, αἱ σκηναί, οἱ τόποι, αἱ κινήσεις· τούτων δὲ τὰ μὲν ὁ σκηνοποιός, τὰ δὲ ὁ χορηγός, τὰ δὲ ⟨ὁ⟩ ὑποκριτὴς ἀποδίδωσι." ("Tragedy, about which you asked, has as its subjects passions and actions, which it imitates, of whatever sort either of these may be. The means by which it effects the imitation are plot, thought, diction, metre, rhythm, song, and in addition to these the visual aspects (*opseis*), the stage sets, the places, the movements; of these some are rendered by the maker of stage-sets, others by the *khorēgos*, and others by the actor.") *Opseis* (plural) is either one of four elements of spectacle, in which case it probably refers to the appearance of the actors, or it has to be taken as a dramatic constituent which is then subdivided into the three elements following it. Unfortunately, there is no indisputable correspondence between the spectacle parts and the tasks of the people responsible for them. A different view is expressed by Rerusino (1993) 39–40 and Bonanno (2000) 407–410, who think that there is indeed a clear correspondence and that the treatise elucidates and supplements Aristotle.

poet. The poets, however, were also called *didaskaloi* (and *tragōidodidaskaloi* or *kōmōidodidaskaloi*, respectively)[23] with reference to the function many of them performed as producers (or stage directors) of their own plays well beyond the fifth century; and the art of *didaskalos*—literally teacher, master—could hardly be thought to be unrelated to *opsis*. Therefore, it is necessary for us to assume that the same person—the dramatic poet—often had to be master of two different, though overlapping, trades, corresponding to the composition of his plays and their stage presentation. Given that *didaskalos* and *didaskalia* are the closest Greek terms to 'producer' and 'stage production,' it is remarkable that the first historian of theatre and author of such works as *Productions* (Διδασκαλίαι) and *Dionysiac Victories* (see above p. 48) does not use these terms in *Poetics*—except once: Aristotle uses the word τραγῳδοδιδάσκαλοι (producers of tragedy)[24] in his brief historical sketch of the beginnings of drama (49a5), when no distinction could yet be made between poets and performers.[25]

Now, according to Aristotle's doctrine about *empeiria* (experience, practice without formal knowledge of principles), *technē* (art, set of rules, system of making or doing),[26] and *architektonikē* ('architecture,' master-art or science which employs other, subsidiary, arts to pursue its purpose),[27] *didaskalia* might have been considered an 'architecture' that used a host of supplementary arts, including poetry, music, acting, and a variety of visual arts and crafts, to achieve its end. Aristotle touched on acting, though from the viewpoint of the orator, when he wrote, a few years before the *Poetics*, the first systematic handbook (literally, a *technē*) on *Rhetoric*, but unlike the Roman masters of rhetoric, Cicero and Quintilian, he only focused on voice management and delivery, and ignored deportment, gestures and body language. Shortly afterward he also wrote what was to become the basis of every study and theory of poetry and drama ever since. But the *Poetics* is, precisely, a treatise

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23 "Callimachus' πίναξ καὶ ἀναγραφὴ τῶν κατὰ χρόνους καὶ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς γενομένων διδασκάλων [frr. 454–456 Pf.] must have been a standard work," Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 70. See also, for instance, Kratin. fr. 256; Ar. *Ach.* 626; *Eq.* 507, 517; *Pax* 737; *Thesm.* 88; Isocr. *Panathen.* 168. 12; Arist. *Eth. Eudem.* 1230b19; Athen. 15. 56; Pollux 1. 79, 4. 122, 5. 100, 7. 46, 10. 96.

24 Inaccurately translated as "writers of tragedies" (Bywater), "poets of tragedy" (Heath), and so forth. Butcher's "tragedians" and Janko's periphrasis (Janko [1987] 5), "others presented tragedies instead of epics," are perhaps preferable, the former because it is nonspecific and the latter because it circumvents the difficulty.

25 Cf. the preceding phrase: παραφανείσης δὲ τῆς τραγῳδίας καὶ κωμῳδίας, "when tragedy and comedy came into sight" (1449a2).

26 On the emergence of an art, *technē*, from repeated memories of the same thing, see *Metaphysics* 980b29–982a2.

27 *Eth. Nic.* 1094a10–b11, 1141b23–27; *Metaphys.* 981a–b6; *Phys.* 194b2–4.

on the art of poetry; it was not devised to be about the composite art of stage presentation of dramatic poetry (*didaskalia*) as well. The latter was, of course, generally recognized (because it was so widespread) in antiquity, and Aristotle collected historical evidence about performances and contests in the dramatic festivals of Athens. However, *didaskalia* as a *technē* (or rather *architektonikē* in the Aristotelian sense), i.e. a system of principles and interdependent rules organized so as to reflect actual practice and offer potential guidance to performers, did not exist in antiquity—perhaps it did not come to be until thousands of years later—, and Aristotle cannot be blamed for not attempting to deal with it. Unlike the scope of *Nāṭya Śāstra*, the Sanskrit poetics of theatre arts (in which dramatic poetry and music are included),[28] the composite art (actually, *architektonikē*) of theatre production is not a subject that *could have been* included in Aristotle's *Poetics*. This is why he could say without a trace of exaggeration, or lack of esteem for the theatre, that the spectacle was something *atechnotaton*, utterly ignorant of art rules; not merely the element which "is the least artistic of all the parts, and has least to do with the art of poetry,"[29] but an art in its own right that had never been studied, described or systematized.[30] Still, he includes *opsis* in the parts of *tragedy*, because tragedy is intended for the stage; but that does not make spectacle a part of tragic *poetry*, and Aristotle is careful to allow no uncertainty about it. We will return to this question after we examine the concept of the 'nontechnical' in *Poetics*, in comparison with the use of the same concept in *Rhetoric*.

'Nontechnical' in Poetics *and* Rhetoric

There is a useful parallel between *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* in that both treatises deal with the composition of literary works intended for public performance, but their author refrains from discussing the latter because performance relies on different arts (separate from the art of composition) which had not been methodically examined by Aristotle's time. Just as *opsis* is emotionally affecting (*psychagōgikon*) in tragedy, so *hypokrisis*, acting (mainly voice modulation in the delivery of a public speech), is very powerful (δύναμιν ἔχει μεγίστην), as Aristotle writes, "but nobody has so far attempted (to make

28 "*Nāṭya* (= drama + dance + music)," Rangacharya (2007) 1.

29 So Bywater (1984) 2321, and similarly Butcher (1907) 29, and many others ever since.

30 This is why Halliwell's suggestion that "what Aristotle clearly means [by 'unartistic'] is that [*opsis*] is not part of the *poet*'s art, but someone else's" (Halliwell [1998] 340) is right in its first part, but hardly so in its second ("someone else's").

a study of) matters related to acting. [...] So there has been no systematic treatise (*technē*) as yet dealing with these things" (*Rhet.* 3, 1403b20–22, 35); in fact, "the ability to act is (a gift) of nature and (something) less technical (*atechnoteron*)" (1404a15). Aristotle likens orators talented in delivery and voice management to the tragic actors who can use their voice so as to express each emotion: the latter "usually carry the prizes in the dramatic contests" (and "now count more than the poets") (1403b33–34), the former are successful in political contests on account of the depravity of the audience, which seeks emotional excitement from the speakers rather than demonstrative reasoning about the matter in hand (1403b34, 1404a5–6).

Furthermore, he makes a clear distinction between *entechnoi* and *atechnoi pisteis* (*Rhet.* 1355b35), that is to say, between *technical means of persuasion* provided by the art of rhetoric and *nontechnical* ones, namely, "laws, witnesses, treaties, confessions under torture, oaths" (1375a22–25).[31] He thus uses the adjective *atechnos* in two differing meanings in *Rhetoric*: (*a*) with reference to *hypokrisis* in the delivery of speech, a practice ignorant of art rules (*atechnoteron*, nontechnical) and unsystematic; (*b*) with reference to the means of persuasion, *atechnoi* (or *atechna*) signifies a series of steps not devised by the orator because, although followed by him, they do not belong to the art of rhetoric. A comparable differentiation in the meaning and use of *atechnos* is to be recognized in *Poetics*: (*a*) with reference to *opsis*, *atechnotaton* means utterly nontechnical; (*b*) the comparative and superlative forms, *atechnoteron* and *atechnotatē*, are also used with reference to faulty construction of certain aspects of a plot on the part of mediocre poets. The former meaning we have discussed already. Two passages instantiating the latter are examined below.

In Aristotle's discussion and rating of the five types of *anagnōrisis* (recognition, discovery), an important component of complex dramatic plot, the kind of recognition called most unskillful (*atechnotatē*) is the one effected by signs, such as scars or necklaces (*Poet.* 1454b20), which correspond to the nontechnical means of persuasion in *Rhetoric*; while of all recognition types "the *best* is that which arises from the incidents themselves, where the startling discovery is made by probable circumstances. Such is that in the *Oedipus* of Sophocles, and in the *Iphigenia*; for it was probable that Iphigenia should wish to dispatch a letter" (1455a16–19, tr. adapted from Butcher). The "best" recognition, then, is that which is intrinsic to the plot, and corresponds

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[31] How and to what extent these nontechnical means of persuasion were used in Athenian courts of law is a matter of recent dispute (see Thür [2005]) that has no direct relevance to the subject of this paper.

to the *entechnoi pisteis* (technical/artistic means of persuasion) in *Rhetoric*. In either case, the most skillful (*entechnos*, best) use of the arts of poetry and rhetoric is that which is related to and promotes the purpose of each art: persuasion by demonstrative reasoning, and mimesis "of actions and life" that gives rise to the specific tragic emotions, respectively.

Another instance of the same meaning of *atechnos* with reference to mediocre poets unable to bring about the proper emotions and pleasure of tragedy by means of the composition of the plot is mentioned in *Poet.* 14: just as there is a "best" type of recognition, so there is the "best" kind of tragedy on Aristotle's ranking, namely, "the best tragedy according to the rules of art" (ἡ κατὰ τὴν τέχνην καλλίστη τραγῳδία [ch. 13, 1453a23]). Its plot must be complex rather than simple (it must contain, that is, peripeteia and recognition) and then it must be "representative of terrible and pitiable things (for this is what is peculiar to this kind of imitation)" (ch. 13, 1452b31–33). Now, "it is possible," Aristotle says, "that fear and pity may arise from the spectacle and it is also possible (to arise) from the very structure of things, which is superior and indicative of a better poet. […] But to give rise to this effect by mere spectacle is less artistic (*atechnoteron*), and depends on spending; and those who make use of the spectacle to give rise to a sense, not of the terrible, but only of the portentous have nothing in common with tragedy. For not every kind of pleasure must be sought from tragedy but [only] that which is proper to it. And because the poet must give rise to pleasure from pity and fear by means of mimesis, it is obvious that this must be built into the incidents" (ch. 14, 1453b1–3, 7–14). In the context of chs. 13–14, concerned as they are with guidelines for the construction of good tragic plots, Aristotle's reference to those who rely on *opsis* to induce the tragic emotions must be understood as a criticism, not of producers and actors (despite the fact that by his time tragic masks had already begun to develop features indicating horror, distress and suchlike emotions), but of poets entrusting to performers the most important part of their own task: to bring about the proper pleasure of tragedy through the plots they ought to compose. Therefore, *atechnoteron* is rightly taken to mean rather unartistic, i.e. without regard for the rules of the art of tragic poetry.

It remains for us to reexamine side by side—with special attention to grammatical similarities—the above passage from *Poet.* 14 and the one from *Poet.* 6, whose interpretation has been the main concern of this paper:

> A. ἡ δὲ ὄψις ψυχαγωγικὸν μέν, ἀτεχνότατον δὲ καὶ ἥκιστα οἰκεῖον τῆς ποιητικῆς.
>
> The spectacle is, surely, capable of moving the soul, but it is altogether nontechnical [or unartistic] *and* hardly related to poetic art. (6, 1450b16–17)

> B. τὸ δὲ διὰ τῆς ὄψεως τοῦτο παρασκευάζειν ἀτεχνότερον καὶ χορηγίας δεόμενόν ἐστιν.
>
> But to give rise to this effect by mere spectacle is less artistic *and* depends on spending. (14, 1453b7–8)

In both passages spectacle is said to be something unartistic (literally, 'nontechnical'). Passage A describes spectacle as unrelated to poetic art; passage B describes it as an unartistic and expensive means to use in order to bring about an aproximation of the tragic emotions (it actually results in a sense of the portentous rather than of the terrible, and so it has nothing to do with tragedy). The noticeable relation between these passages has prompted interpreters to equate *atechnotaton* and *atechnoteron* as referring to poetic art in both cases. But can this equation be valid? Much depends on whether 'and' (italicized in the translations of the two passages above) is explicative or simply connective. Gudeman labeled it (in both passages) "epexegeticum,"[32] and Sykoutris wrote that "the (phrase) 'hardly related to poetic art' explains *atechnotaton*."[33] More recently, R. Janko added a comment on passage A to his translation of *Poetics*, which echoes Gudeman's suggestion that 'and' in passages like those quoted above is equivalent to 'd.h.' (i.e.): "(the spectacle) is less artistic, i.e. less germane to the art in question, poetic composition."[34] Else simply replaced 'and' with a comma in his translation and turned "the (element) least integral to the art of poetry" in passage A into an epexegesis of *atechnotaton*.[35] However, 'and' does not even make sense as explicative in B, and does not *have* to be explicative in passage A, either. In both passages, spectacle is qualified by two complements connected with the conjunction 'and.' These qualifications, although related, are not synonymous, and should not be read as if the second clarifies the first. Which is exactly what has happened with respect to "unartistic" and "unrelated to poetic art."

It should be kept in mind that spectacle is a part of tragedy as much as plot, character drawing, thought, poetic language and music are, but it is "hardly related to *poetic art*," which is actually the subject of *Poetics*. Once this distinction between tragedy as drama—implied by "the definition

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32 Gudeman (1934) 190.

33 Sykoutris (1937) 66, n. 8.

34 Janko (1987) 105, note on 53b1–11; cf. Gudeman (1934) 55, n. 11. Gudeman's own translation of passage (*a*) reads as follows: "die szenische Ausstattung dagegen ist zwar reizvoll, liegt aber der Dichtkunst ganz fern und ist ihr am wenigsten angemessen" (Gudeman [1921] 25).

35 "As for the costuming [= *opsis*], it has emotional power to be sure, but is the least artistic element, the least integral to the art of poetry" (Else [1963] 274).

of [tragedy's] essence"[36]—and "the poetry of tragedy"[37] is made, Aristotle's reputed ambivalence about, or even dismissal of, theatrical performance disappears. *Opsis* belongs neither to the art of poetry nor to any other *technē* acknowledged as such in antiquity. It is altogether nontechnical (in the sense discussed in p. 55 above) even though it is a necessary formative element of tragedy in performance.

The Vanishing Art

We should recall in this connection that several of the six formative elements of tragedy may be seen to correspond to different arts or sciences, some of which had already been the subject of major works by Aristotle, notably the ethical works and *Rhetoric*. This is why he does not discuss *dianoia* in the *Poetics*, because, as he says, "[c]oncerning Thought, we may assume what is said in the *Rhetoric*, to which inquiry the subject more strictly belongs" (*Poet.* 19, 1456a34–36, tr. Butcher). *Melopoiia* he does not even define because it "is too completely understood to require explanation" (1449b35, tr. Bywater), although it is possible he returned to the subject in the second (now lost) book of *Poetics* (fr. 5, Bywater, Kassel) along the lines of his discussion of music as imitation of emotions and ethical qualities we find in the last book of *Politics*. *Ēthos* he discusses briefly with reference to character-drawing so as to indicate how the dramatic characters might be designed in a manner consistent with tragic plots, but all basic concepts about ethical characteristics and virtues, moral states and their relationship to emotions, as expounded in the ethical works, are taken for granted in *Poetics*; and the same is true of Aristotle's fundamental account of the psychology of emotions and their contribution to choice (προαίρεσις) and decision-making which is offered in the second book of *Rhetoric*. But when we come to *opsis* there is no technical frame of reference to which this formative element could be related. So the only thing the philosopher could do was to point out this fact, as well as to assert that theatre production was no part of tragic poetry, and later offer some practical advice to the tragic poet, as we shall see, regarding the composition of a play that was by definition—Aristotle's own definition—bound for the stage.

We are now better prepared to appreciate what Aristotle says about *opsis*: it belongs to the six formative elements of tragedy "because they [all agents concerned: tragic poets and performers] carry out the imitation by

36 τὸν ὅρον τῆς οὐσίας (1449b23).
37 ἡ τῆς τραγῳδίας ποίησις (1447a13).

enactment" (6, 1449b31); this assertion stands in no opposition to his equally unequivocal statement that *opsis*—both in the sense of "the arrangement of the spectacle" as a whole, and of the "execution of the visual aspects" of theatre production (1449b33 and 1450b18)—does not belong to the art of poetry. Regarding the first of the above statements, what Aristotle actually says in the first enumeration of the qualitative parts (see pp. 48–49) is that since a play is bound to be performed by actors the poet has to take this into account while he composes his work. No former technical knowledge of other theatre arts was necessary for that, because such arts as acting or epic delivery (*rhapsōidia*) and others originated with the poets anyway (*Rhet.* 1404a21–23), and a good poet, we remember, could do the right thing in composing his work "either due to art or due to nature," as the philosopher says of Homer with reference to the unity of plot of *Odyssey* and *Iliad* (*Poet.* 1451a23–29). It should be noted, however, that the art of the actor (*hypokritikē*) is distinguished and explicitly said to be different from the art of poetry (*Poet.* 1456b10–18, 1462a5), despite the fact that just as Homer and his forebears must have been the original rhapsodes, so Thespis and Aeschylus were the original actors.

Aristotle's Advice to Aspiring Playwrights

In any case, Aristotle also has some concrete advice, as far as theatre production is concerned, to offer the aspiring dramatic poet. It comes in the last chapter devoted to the construction of plots (*Poet.* ch. 17):

> (The poet) should construct the plots (of his plays) and work out the diction while at the same time placing (the action) before his eyes as much as possible; for in this way, by seeing most clearly as if he were present at the incidents themselves, he could find out what is appropriate and the contrary would be least likely to escape notice. An indication of this is the fault found in Karkinos [...].[38] And also by working out at the same time as many (incidents) as possible with the (appropriate) figures (of movement); for owing to nature itself those who are in a state of passion are most convincing: he who is tempest-tossed

[38] Here follows a problematic short passage (21 words) about what escaped the notice of the poet Karkinos because he had failed to visualize the situation in which the hero Amphiaraos made his entry "from the temple." We do not have the play and cannot understand what it was that displeased the spectators, but S.H. Butcher's supposition (in his 1894 edition of *Poetics*) is still as good as any other: "Amphiaraus was on his way from the temple. This fact escaped the observation of one who did not see the situation. On the stage, however, the piece failed, the audience being offended at the oversight" (ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς σκηνῆς ἐξέπεσεν δυσχερανάντων τοῦτο τῶν θεατῶν).

> manifests his distress and he who is in anger manifests his irritation most truthfully. This is the reason why the art of poetry requires a person who is intelligent rather than manic; for the former of these are flexible while the latter are beside themselves. (1455a22–34)

I do not intend to repeat here what I have written about this passage in a recent article on which the above translation is based.[39] I shall only highlight a few points bearing directly on the argument of the present paper. The advice that the poet should place the action before his eyes, "as if he were present at the incidents themselves," while putting together the plot and elaborating on the diction of his work sounds reasonable enough and perhaps even applicable to any fiction writer. However, the reference to Karkinos' failure in actual theatre conditions shows that Aristotle speaks of plays that will satisfy or displease the audience on account of their construction as dramatic pieces intended for performance.

Even more clearly pertinent to performance is Aristotle's requirement that the dramatist should work out, at the same time as he composes his play, as many incidents as possible in terms of *schēmata*. This is usually translated as 'gestures,' but the word means 'figures,' and in this case it should be taken to mean figures of movement on the stage, including blocking (working out the movement and positioning of actors), gestures, and even dancing. Aristotle's advice is pregnant with meaning because (*a*) he asks the poet to envisage the action and its future performance, and so to anticipate the work of the *didaskalos* while writing his play. (*b*) He implies that this can be done by visualizing the characters when they are involved in emotionally charged dramatic situations—always crucial in tragedy—as if they were real people experiencing strong emotions; because "owing to nature itself those who are in a state of passion are most convincing: he who is tempest-tossed manifests his distress and he who is in anger manifests his irritation most truthfully"; the poet will thus be able to incorporate (or imply) such physical movements and behaviour in the composition of his text. (*c*) Finally, Aristotle offers his assessment regarding the poets who are best suited to become good dramatists: they are not the ecstatic but the intelligent ones, because only the latter have the flexibility necessary for visualizing the emotional behaviour of their characters as people going through predicaments in real life. This can also be taken as indirect encouragement or discouragement, as the case might be, to poets striving to become dramatists.

39 Sifakis (2009).

It is easy to appreciate why, by placing the action before his eyes, the poet could prevent mistakes in turning a story into a well-articulated dramatic plot that will play well before a theatre audience. However, this recommendation is coupled with Aristotle's further suggestion that the poet should work out not only his plot *at the same time* as the diction, but also elaborate "*at the same time* as many (incidents) as possible with the (appropriate) figures (of movement)"—the keyword in both cases being the verb συναπεργάζεσθαι (to elaborate, work out in detail at the same time). It is obvious, then, that his advice equally refers to performance and acting, something that is confirmed by a similar passage from the *Rhetoric*, in which the practice of public speakers to elaborate their speech (συναπεργαζομένους) "with figures of movement and cries and clothes and acting in general" is approvingly referred to, as it makes them appear more pitiable: "they thus make their disaster appear near at hand by making it come into sight either as something about to happen or something that has just happened."[40]

As we have seen, Aristotle (in the face of the above passage) does not include gestures and body language in his discussion of acting (p. 53 above), and we do not even know whether he would consider acting as a part of the "arrangement (or universe) of the spectacle" (p. 52), which was probably something more limited in scope than *didaskalia* / stage production. However, the fact that he recognizes the power of acting both in theatres and law-courts[41] (although he states bluntly that *hypokritikē* had not yet been developed as an art form and its use depends on natural talent, see p. 55 above), unrelated though it is to *opsis* as such, surely testifies to his interest in, and incisive observation of public/dramatic performances, particularly when he defines what he calls the agonistic (competitive) style of diction as *hypokritikōtatē* (most suitable to acting), further subdividing it into ethical (expressive of *ēthos*) and emotional. "Hence the actors," he continues, "are after plays of this kind, and poets are after such actors" (capable, that is, of imitating character and emotions respectively [*Rhet.* 1413b9–12]). But here I must refrain from further quoting Aristotle's discussion of acting in *Rhetoric* and refer the patient reader to earlier work of mine on this topic.[42]

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40 ἐπεὶ δ' ἐγγὺς φαινόμενα τὰ πάθη ἐλεεινά ἐστιν [...] ἀνάγκη τοὺς *συναπεργαζομένους σχήμασι καὶ φωναῖς καὶ ἐσθῆσι καὶ ὅλως ὑποκρίσει* ἐλεεινοτέρους εἶναι (ἐγγὺς γὰρ ποιοῦσι φαίνεσθαι τὸ κακόν, *πρὸ ὀμμάτων ποιοῦντες* ἢ ὡς μέλλοντα ἢ ὡς γεγονότα) (*Rhet.* 1386a29–35). The crucial expressions used in this passage and in the one from the *Poetics* translated above (p. 59) include forms of the verb συναπεργάζεσθαι (elaborate) and the phrase πρὸ ὀμμάτων τίθεσθαι or ποιεῖν (to put before one's eyes).

41 For law-courts in particular see Edith Hall's seminal paper: Hall (1995) and (2006a).

42 Sifakis (1998) and (2002).

PROPPING UP GREEK TRAGEDY: THE RIGHT USE OF *OPSIS*[*]

David Konstan

In this chapter, I undertake first to show that Aristotle, in the *Poetics*, does not take the negative view of *opsis* or visual effects that many scholars suppose; rather, he maintains that the use of such effects must be in the service of the emotions proper to tragedy. Second, I argue that the Greek tragedians indeed used stage props and other visible items in the way that Aristotle recommends, and I provide several illustrative instances.

After enumerating the six parts or elements of tragedy, and describing the first four (plot, character, thought, and diction), Aristotle goes on to state (*Poetics* 1450b15–20):

> Of the last [two], melody is the greatest of the relishes [ἡδύσματα], whereas visual effect [ὄψις] is indeed the most stirring, but also the most unartistic [ἀτεχνότατον] and least appropriate to the poetic art. For the power of tragedy exists even without performance and actors, and besides, the art of the stage designer is more important than that of poets in regard to the production of visual effects.

This statement has led scholars to infer that Aristotle held the visual aspect of tragedy (and to a degree also musical accompaniment) in contempt, and in explanation of his attitude it has been suggested (among other things) that he encountered drama chiefly through texts rather than in performance.[1]

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* This chapter is dedicated to my friend and colleague, Stavroula Kiritsi, who has taught me much about the performance of ancient drama. I wish also to thank Anne-Sophie Noel for detailed comments on an earlier draft; I am particularly grateful to her for sending me a copy of her unpublished talk (see Noel unpublished in the bibliography), and to see that we are largely in agreement about Aristotle and the role of props.

1 See, e.g., Taplin (1977b) 477, who suggests that, on Aristotle's view, "the play is best appreciated when read"; Halliwell (1986) 343, for the idea that "Aristotle was responding … to the loosening of the bond between text and performance"; Bonanno 1997 on the intensely literary environment of the late fourth century (it was the time when Lycurgus collected the scripts of tragedy for preservation); also Hunter 2002. On Aristotle and reading of scripts, see Bassi 2006. Billault 2001 suggests that Aristotle was responding to the relative decline of the role of the poet in the 4th century, which was eclipsed by that of the actors and *khorēgos*: "En distinguant l'art poétique du spectacle théâtral, il [Aristotle] sépare aussi le poète de ceux dont l'activité permet les representations." Marzullo 1980 suggests that Aristotle was reacting rather to the exaggerated use of visual effects in tragedy of his own time; J.I. Porter (2010)

But Aristotle's view of *opsis* is more nuanced than many commentators have supposed.[2] Thus, a little later (1453b1–14) he affirms that "it is possible, to be sure, for what is frightening [τὸ φοβερόν] and pitiable to arise from visual effects, but it is also possible for it to arise from the arrangement of events itself, which is prior and pertains to the better poet." Aristotle then explains why: "For the plot must be arranged in such a way that one who hears the events both shudders and feels pity as a result of what occurs, even without seeing them: this is what one would experience upon hearing the plot of the *Oedipus*." Aristotle goes on to observe:

> To provide this by way of visual effect is more unartistic and also requires financial support. Those who provide not what is frightening but rather merely what is monstrous [τὸ τερατῶδες] via visual effect have nothing in common with tragedy. For one must not seek every kind of pleasure from tragedy, but just that which is appropriate to it. Since the poet must provide pleasure from pity and fear through representation, it is clear that this must be embedded in the events.

Aristotle would seem to be allowing that the tragic emotions can be elicited by *opsis*, but that this is properly the job of the story. Hence, a tragic poet must not rely on visual effects alone, or primarily. But he then appears to qualify this concession by associating *opsis* with a certain kind of shock effect rather than with the emotions of pity and fear proper. At least to the extent that visual effects are productive of this alternate response, it is not appropriate to exploit them in tragedy. Toward the end of the *Poetics*, however, where Aristotle extols tragedy as superior to epic, he seems to grant visual effects a greater value. He repeats that one can appreciate drama, like epic, by reading, but adds that tragedy has everything that epic has (it can even exploit the hexameter meter), but has "in addition, as no small element, music and

115 affirms: "If Aristotle claims to be able to experience fear and terror (and therefore pity and possibly catharsis) merely from reading *Oedipus the King*, or from hearing it read, then it is surely because in his mind's eye he is hearing the voices, the screams, the choral antiphonies, the verbal rhythms, the staccatos and stichomythias, is visualizing the staging and the scenery, the stumbling of the blinded king, and so on, just as the poet had done when he composed the drama to begin with." Contra Scott 1999, who insists that dance (and to a lesser degree spectacle) were essential to Aristotle's theory of tragedy; on the importance of music, see Sifakis (2001) 54–71, who defends, among other things, the importance of relishes in cuisine ("without *hêdusmata* there is no cooking", p. 57).

[2] Cf. De Marinis (2009) 1 "pur restando, nell'insieme, all'interno di una concezione del teatro come fatto verbale-letterario, le considerazioni che il filosofo antico [i.e., Aristotle] dedica alle varie componenti semiologiche ed espressive dello spettacolo, e in particolare ai rapporti fra testo scritto e scena, sono in realtà molto più complesse e sfaccettate, quando non contraddittorie, di quel che risulta di solito dalle moderne interpretazioni della *Poetica*."

visual effects, through which pleasures are most vividly produced" (1462a15–17). This would seem flatly to contradict Aristotle's earlier censure of visual effects, and indeed many editors have bracketed the words καὶ τὰς ὄψεις.[3] The reason for the deletion is partly that the word "element" (μέρος) is in the singular, and so would seem to refer to just one part of tragedy, not two (music and visual effects), and partly the fact that Aristotle had earlier specified that music was the most pleasing element (the word for "relishes" [ἡδύσματα] is related to that for "pleasures" [ἡδοναί]), whereas visual effect was responsible rather for what is frightening or shocking. But it is also, no doubt, due to a perceived inconsistency between this claim for visual effects and Aristotle's earlier insistence that the pleasure deriving from such effects has nothing to do with that specific to tragedy (and he repeats a few lines later that tragedy must not produce just any kind of pleasure, 1462b13–14).

I wish first to argue, or rather observe, that Aristotle does not maintain that the pleasure produced by visual effects is necessarily incompatible with the pleasure proper to tragedy.[4] Visual effects can indeed give rise to strong responses in the audience that are not the emotions specific to tragedy, according to Aristotle, and should not be exploited to this end. But they can also provide, or at least support, a suitably tragic pleasure in conjunction with the right kind of *muthos*. To see how, we must consider just what is at stake in the production of pity and fear, and why this should be at odds with what Aristotle calls τὸ τερατῶδες, that is, mere shock or horror, which not

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3 Deleted, e.g., by Spengel 1837, followed by Kassel (1965) 48; Bywater (1909/1984) 2340 (translation adapted to follow Kassel's text, though Bywater retained it in his 1909 edition); Whalley (1997) 137; retained by Halliwell 1995, in the new Loeb edition, and defended somewhat tentatively by Janko (1987) 156; Heath (1996) xxxvi, xlviii expresses doubts, but retains it in his translation (p. 47). On the plural, see Bonanno 2000.

4 Chaston (2010) 7 makes a stronger claim: "To privilege the visual … does not appear at odds with Aristotle's views." She bases her view on two passages in particular. In the first (*Poetics* 1148b15–18), Aristotle explains the pleasure that is derived from viewing images (εἰκόνες), and relates this to the pleasure people take in seeing an imitation (μίμημα); but this pleasure is not necessarily that appropriate to tragedy. In the second (*Poetics* 1449b31–33), Aristotle states that "since agents produce representation [μίμησις], it follows first, of necessity, that the arrangement of the visual [ὁ τῆς ὄψεως κόσμος] should be some part of tragedy." But Aristotle is here justifying the inclusion of visual effects at all among the parts of tragedy; by "arrangement" (κόσμος), Aristotle refers to the appearance or composition (or, perhaps, the decorative quality) of individual items such as masks, costumes, or scenery, not, I think, as some take it, to "l'ordine di ciò che si vede" (De Marinis (2009) 2). I may add that Aristotle's recommendation that the playwright visualize the action and the gestures and postures of the actors (*Poetics* 1455a22–34) shows that he certainly has performance in mind, but does not bear directly on his discussion of *opsis*; see especially Sifakis 2009 for the interpretation of this passage.

only differs from the emotions that tragedy seeks to elicit but fails even to qualify as an emotion at all, as Aristotle understands the idea.[5]

How, then, does tragedy elicit pity and fear? I have argued elsewhere (Konstan 2008) that these emotions are not responses to moments of high tension in a play, for example to Philoctetes' howls of pain in Sophocles' tragedy, or the self-blinding of Oedipus—that is, the moment at which he appears on stage with bloody sockets, or when the action is narrated by the messenger. Rather, it is the story of Oedipus' sufferings from beginning to end that arouses pity and fear in the audience, and similarly for Philoctetes, however pitiable he may seem when he is overcome by the anguish of his wound. To put it differently, pity and fear are aroused by the complete action or *praxis*, with its beginning, middle, and end. They are not episodic, but totalizing, and correspond to the kind of *praxis* that is proper to tragedy. Let me briefly review the evidence for this interpretation.

Pity and fear are first mentioned in the *Poetics* in the definition of tragedy: "Tragedy, then, is a representation of a serious and complete action that has magnitude …, effecting, through pity and fear, the catharsis of such sentiments [παθήματα]" (1449b24–28; translations are my own). The most natural way to understand this statement, I think, is that pity and fear are a consequence of the complete action. In the next passage concerning pity and fear, Aristotle observes: "since the representation is not just of a complete action but also of frightening and pitiable things, these things [i.e., things that are frightening and pitiable] occur most of all when they occur contrary to expectation on account of each other [i.e., are causally related]. For in this way they have more of the amazing than if they occur spontaneously and by chance" (1452a1–6). Once again, pity and fear seem to respond to the chain of events that constitute the action as a whole, and not to individual moments. Aristotle cites in illustration an actual event in which a statue of Mitys fell upon and killed Mitys' assassin: though accidental, the end is morally satisfying, and Aristotle concludes by saying: "Thus such stories are necessarily the finest" (1542a10–11).

In his discussion of recognitions, Aristotle affirms that they are best in tragedy when they coincide with the reversal (*peripeteia*): "for such a recognition and reversal will have either pity or fear, and it is of such actions that tragedy is assumed to be a representation" (1452a36–b1). The moment of recognition is of course often surprising, but it is the reversal, which heralds

[5] For τὸ τερατῶδες as "shock," see Freeland (1992) 121; cf. Dadlez (2005) 354.

the denouement and the completion of the action, that elicits pity and fear. So too, Aristotle maintains that the composition (σύνθεσις) of a tragedy should be complex (or intricate: πεπλεγμένην) rather than simple (ἁπλῆν), and imitative of frightening and pitiable things (1452b30–33): what is imitated is, I take it, the tragic *praxis* as a whole. Again, when Aristotle states that only those plots are productive of fear and pity in which a man of high station, but not outstandingly virtuous, suffers misfortune, and this on account of an error rather than vice (1453a7–10), it seems clear that these emotions are elicited by the story, not by isolated pathetic episodes. Finally, Aristotle notes that the kinds of actions best suited to produce fear and pity are those that occur among kin (ἐν ταῖς φιλίαις, 1453b19); it is the entire *praxis*, as represented in the play, that generates the tragic emotions.[6]

I have been arguing that it is the complete *praxis* that produces pity and fear because, if this is in fact the case, it is clear why Aristotle will not have approved of the effects caused by visual props, insofar as they merely induce a sense of shock or horror that is independent of the action or plot. Pity and fear are, for Aristotle, distinct from such elementary and instinctive responses as shock or horror, which do not have the moral complexity of emotions or *pathê* proper. Consider the image of the self-blinded Oedipus, as he staggers on stage from the central portal of the palace, no doubt wearing a bloodied, eyeless mask. Is this sight in and of itself pitiable? The answer is clearly no. For if Oedipus deserved to be blinded—if the act of killing his father had really been criminal, for example—we would not pity him, according to Aristotle, any more than we pity murderers who have been condemned in court. The same holds true for Philoctetes' agonies: if he is suffering them justly, there is no room for pity, which Aristotle defines as "a kind of pain in the case of an apparent destructive or painful harm in one not deserving to encounter it," adding that it must be of the kind that "one might expect oneself, or one of one's own, to suffer" (*Rhetoric* 2.8, 1385b13–16); as a result, we tend to pity people who are in some respect similar (ὅμοιοι) to ourselves. Nor would such spectacles inspire fear in the audience, inasmuch as fear too, or at least fear for others, depends on recognizing one's similarity to the person in danger; as Aristotle puts it in the *Poetics*, "pity concerns the undeserving person, fear concerns the one who is similar" (13, 1453a2–6). Since the spectators do not regard themselves as vicious, they will not recognize a likeness between

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6 The simple act of murdering a kinsman is not in itself productive of pity and fear; it must occur as a result of a chain of events that makes the deed seem both necessary and surprising.

themselves and evil characters on stage. And indeed, the misfortunes of villains do not arouse pity and fear, and for just that reason are not suitable subjects for tragedy.

In order for an event to arouse genuine pity and fear, then, it must be embedded in a narrative that reveals its moral status. The revulsion that the spectacle of a blinding, or of any form of intense suffering, produces is a different matter, more like the kinds of instinctive reactions that at least some Stoics labeled "proto-" or "pre-emotions" (προπάθειαι): the *locus classicus* for these (though not under this name) is Seneca's *De ira* (2.1.4), in which he affirms that anger is a response to an undeserved injury, and as such it is not simple (*simplex*) but rather compound and made up of multiple elements (*compositus et plura continens*). Among simple impulses, Seneca lists such items as goose pimples, an aversion to touching certain objects, the rising of one's hair upon hearing bad news, and the vertigo produced by heights, as well as the response to events seen on stage or in paintings, or read about in books, or indeed the spectacle of even a perfectly just chastisement. These responses are not anger, however; rather than emotions, they are preliminary starting-points for emotions (*nec adfectus sed principia proludentia adfectibus*, 2.2.6; cf. Graver (2007) 96). The reaction to Aristotle's τὸ τερατῶδες is similarly simple, and lacking the moral complexity of genuine *pathê*. If τὸ τερατῶδες may be seen as the non-moral or pre-emotional counterpart to what is frightening (τὸ φοβερόν), then it would correspond to τὸ φιλάνθρωπον, which, as I have argued elsewhere (Konstan 2005), represents in Aristotle an instinctive sympathy for a person who is suffering, irrespective of merit, and is thus—to use the Stoic terminology—the pre-emotional counterpart to pity.

There is no doubt that visual effects are particularly apt to elicit such "preliminary starting-points for emotions," in Seneca's phrase. Since images are devoid of a temporal dimension, they cannot carry a moral meaning, which pertains strictly to stories, but they have a powerful impact by virtue of their vividness or ἐνάργεια. Deploying them in this way, however, has no part in the art of tragedy, and is, as Aristotle says, something of a cheap trick (though it may be economically costly to the *khorēgos*). But *opsis* need not detract from the proper emotional charge of tragedy, and might even support the effect of the argument or plot. If so, the pleasures that it yields may be fully congruent with those specific to tragedy, as Aristotle seems to allow in recognizing visual effects as one of the advantages that tragedy has over epic. Aristotle gives no indication of how *opsis* might work in tandem with the *muthos*, but we may speculate that it would be the case if the visual somehow expressed in condensed form the action as a whole, or served as a symbol of the plot. I believe that the Greek tragedians did in fact exploit visual effects

in this way, and in what follows I offer a few illustrations of what Aristotle might have considered to be a proper use of *opsis*.[7]

At the beginning of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, the scene is carefully set out, in the manner of the Greek tragedians, who had a habit of incorporating stage directions in the dialogue.[8] As Oedipus surveys the group that has come to supplicate him, his first words are ὦ τέκνα ("children," 1), further specified as "young brood" (νέα τροφή), and he repeats the vocative in v. 6 (τέκνα). At this point, he turns and hails a single old man as ὦ γεραιέ (9). In between these two addresses, he proudly identifies himself as "Oedipus, famous among all men" (8). Sophocles has created a vivid tableau, and the old priest confirms the arrangement in his opening statement: "You see our ages as we sit at your altars, some not yet strong enough to fly far, others heavy with old age" (15–17). He goes on to identify himself as a priest of Zeus, and the others as the cream of the unwed youths (ἠιθέων λεκτοί, 18–19). Dawe (1977) 206 has explained that the latter contrast is one of function (priest vs. acolytes), and that there are just two groups on stage. This must be right; the age of the "acolytes" can be very young, as the description of them as still fledglings suggests. It is a vivid opening scene, with children on one side, aged men on the other, and Oedipus in the centre, though it is not designed to instil horror in the spectators. Why has Sophocles been so careful to project it in the text? The reason may lie in the way it signifies a central theme of the play. Although it is not stated explicitly, the audience can be expected to have known that the riddle which the Sphinx posed, and which Oedipus solved, went roughly like this: "What goes on four legs in the morning, two legs in the afternoon, and three legs in the evening" (alternate version: "What has one voice, and is four-footed, two-footed and three-footed?").[9] Oedipus' answer

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7 It has been suggested that *opsis* in the *Poetics* refers exclusively to masks and costume (cf. Else (1967) 90; Else (1986) 136; Halliwell (1986) 338–339; Chaston (2010) 11), but there does not seem to be a good reason to restrict the reference so narrowly; to be sure, props and stage scenery were sparse, but might be said to have a special impact for that very reason; so Taplin (1977b) 478, who maintains, rightly in my view, that *opsis* "must mean 'what is seen' and cannot have a more superficial sense" (that is, just masks and costume).

8 Cf. Wilamowitz (1914b) xxxiv: *e verbis poetarum satis certo colligi actionem*; Taplin (1977b) 28–39; Revermann (2006a) 49–51.

9 Cf. Euripides' *Oedipus* fr. 540a Kannicht (*TrGF* vol. 5.1, p. 573) = fr. 83.22–25 Austin; some doubt has been expressed on whether Sophocles would have been familiar with this version of the riddle (the relative chronology of the two Oedipus tragedies is not certain), but the implicit logic of the play makes it likely, in my view, that he was. See also Athenaeus 10 456B, citing Asclepiades, *FGrHist* 12F; *AP* 14.64; Tzetzes on Lycophron 7; Apollodorus 3.5.8; Diodorus Siculus 4.64.3–4; scholia on Euripides' *Phoenissae* 50; scholia on *Odyssey* 11.271; hypothesis to Aeschylus' *Septem; Mythographus Vaticanus* 2.230.

was, of course, "Man," with the times of day standing for the stages of life: infancy, maturity, and old age. But as critics have seen, there is a sense in which the answer refers more particularly to Oedipus himself, who in the course of the single day on which the action takes place will discover the secret of his own infancy and end up blind and in need of a staff, that is, the third leg that characterizes the dusk of life.[10] Teiresias indeed predicts that Oedipus will end up depending on a stick (σκήπτρῳ, 456), and it is plausible that, after blinding himself, he emerged with such a prop in hand.[11] I would suggest that, although there is no explicit mention in the text, the priest and the other old men at the opening tableau too are equipped with canes, and that the scene thus encapsulates the trajectory of Oedipus over the course of the action, from child to adult to ruined old man. The disposition of the actors on stage, together with the conspicuous prop of the walking stick, condense the plot into a powerful image that would seem to collapse human life into a single moment; the visual simultaneity of the three ages of man mirrors the dramatic evolution of the protagonist.

A second example of how a prop may serve to symbolize the theme of a tragedy, I suggest, is the wreath in Euripides' *Hippolytus*, from which the second version of the play takes its epithet, *Stephanias* or *Stephanephoros*;[12] the reference is to the wreath (στέφανον, v. 73) that Hippolytus carries to place on the statue of Artemis near the beginning of the action. This wreath, which has been plucked, we are told, from an untouched or virgin meadow (ἐξ ἀκηράτου λειμῶνος, 73–74; cf. 76), would appear to symbolize, among other things, Hippolytus' own virginity, on which he insists (σωφρονεῖν [80] may bear this sense), although the association of the wreath with virginity is not as marked in classical literature as it is in other cultures.[13] At all events,

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[10] Cf. Kirk (1986) 17, who notes, in connection with the name "Oedipus," that "the man who knows, *oide*, the truth about the three ages of man as contained in the Sphinx's riddle is the very one who rejects that truth by confounding the three ages in his own case."

[11] George W.M. Harrison suggests to me that the walking stick on which Oedipus presumably leans when blind may also be an ironic recollection of the scepter he carries as king (there may be a hint of this irony in Teiresias' words).

[12] *Stephanias*: Aristophanes of Byzantium, in the hypothesis to the play; *Stephanephoros*: Stobaeus 4.44.34, etc.; see Barrett (1964) 10 n. 1.

[13] But cf. Homer *Il.* 18.597, of virgins dancing: καί ῥ' αἳ μὲν καλὰς στεφάνας ἔχον; *Hom. Hymn to Aphrodite* 119-2-0: πολλαὶ δὲ νύμφαι καὶ παρθένοι ἀλφεσίβοιαι παίζομεν, ἀμφὶ δ' ὅμιλος ἀπείριτος ἐστεφάνωτο; Hes. *Theog.* 57–78 (of Pandora); Pindar *Partheneia* fr. 94b11–12: ὑμνήσω στεφάνοισι θάλλοισα παρθένιον κάρα; Bacchylides 13.58–56. In Goethe's *Faust*, Margarete laments: "Zerrissen liegt der Kranz, die Blumen zerstreut" (Shredded lies the wreath, strewn the flowers). "Der Kranz der Keuschheit" (the wreath of chastity) is a well-known symbol. On the wreath in the *Hippolytus*, see Dingel 2009.

Hippolytus' appearance with the wreath marks it as his property. In a modern theatrical production, in which the stage is often cluttered with furniture and ornaments of all sorts, an item such as a wreath (or, let us say, a hat) might not stand out sufficiently to serve as a symbol that resonates over the length of the action. In ancient drama, however, props were few and elementary, like the painted scenery, when that was introduced, apparently at the behest of Sophocles.[14] Thus, when Theseus enters later in the play, wearing a wreath that is the sign that he has visited an oracle (792, 807; cf. Creon in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* 82–83, on returning from Delphi), it is plausible that the audience would have connected it with the wreath that Hippolytus had dedicated to Artemis, and with Hippolytus' professed virginity as well. Of Theseus' entry, Barrett remarks (1964: 312–314 *ad* 790): "This visit to an oracle is invented by Eur. for the present play ...; he has seen no need to distract us by providing a circumstantial account" (cf. 212 *ad* 281). But the wreath itself may have served his purpose in another fashion. For when Theseus learns of Phaedra's death he tears it from his head (806–807). Thus, immediately before Theseus discovers the letter that Phaedra has left for him, in which she falsely condemns Hippolytus for having attempted to rape her, causing Theseus to curse his son and leading to the young man's dreadful laceration and death as he is dragged by his own horses, Theseus performs a gesture in which he rips up and tosses to the ground a wreath that may have recalled his son's earlier devotion. Might it even have been read as a sign of Theseus' contempt for the boy's professed virginity?[15] At all events, this is the type of visual effect that would be entirely in harmony with the motives that drive the plot, and so might well have gained the approval of Aristotle.[16]

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[14] The evidence that Sophocles introduced scene painting in our sense of the word is questionable; Brown 1984 has argued that the words τρεῖς δε και σκηνογραφίαν Σοφοκλῆς at Aristotle's *Poetics* 1449a18–19 were not written by Aristotle.

[15] Theseus fulminates against what he sees as his son's hypocritical piety at *Hipp.* 948–957.

[16] Boris Nikolsky has pointed out to me two possible additional uses of props in the *Hippolytus* that work in much the way the wreath may have done, that is, to unite thematically different moments in the play. One is the veil, with which Phaedra covers herself in shame (κρύψον, 243, 250), and with which Hippolytus, when he is dying at the very end of the tragedy, asks to be covered (κρύψον, 1458); the other—and far more speculative, as Nikolsky notes—is the couch (κοίτη, 131, 180) on which Phaedra lies in her desperation, and which perhaps reappears (or something resembling it: a stretcher, perhaps) at the end of the tragedy when the torn body of Hippolytus is carried on stage (he is lifted up at 1358–1363, but conceivably is simply being supported by an attendant). For discussion, see Nikolsky (2011) chapter 7; also, Noel 2009 on the bed as a prop in the *Hippolytus* and other tragedies.

If the above examples are any indication of how props and settings were typically employed on the Athenian stage, at least by the best dramatists, then Aristotle was not necessarily prescribing how *opsis* should be employed so much as recording actual practice. Of course, not every stage prop necessarily had a symbolic function. Philoctetes' bow, for example, is essential to the action, but may not have carried an extra symbolic valence or charge; or if it did, I have not discovered it.[17] But in the bare island that Philoctetes has inhabited alone for ten years, and which would offer little distraction to the eye as a backdrop to the action (as always mainly verbal) of the play, there is one feature that might have borne a meaning beyond itself, and that is the cave in which Philoctetes found shelter, and more particularly the fact that it had two mouths or entrances. Odysseus offers this description of Philoctetes' habitat at the very beginning of the play, as he instructs Neoptolemus to reconnoitre the territory: "It is now your job to assist me with the rest, and see where there is a twin-mouthed rock, of such a sort that in the cold there is a double seat in the sun, while in summer a breeze sends sleep through the perforated chamber" (15–19). Several scholars have argued that the second entrance to the cave was from behind the *skênê*, and hence out of sight to the audience.[18] Without taking a firm position on the utility of the double entrance for entrances and exits (whether of Philoctetes or of Odysseus), I would like to suggest that the two mouths of the cave have a symbolic function, and one that may incline us to think that both were visible. In this case, I suspect an allusion to the cave of the nymphs in the *Odyssey*, where again an ἄντρον or cave is said to be provided with two doors (13.109), one facing north and accessible to mortals, whereas that looking to the south is reserved for the gods.[19] The double entrance to Philoctetes' cave may thus carry a hint of his connection with the divinized Heracles, who will make a

[17] Vayos Liapis and Anne-Sophie Noel advise me that Philoctetes' bow does function as a powerful symbol, condensing the play's major themes and plotlines (Philoctetes' hardship but also his dangerousness, the Greeks' callousness towards him but also their need for him) into a visually arresting material object. See further Fletcher, this volume.

[18] Cf., e.g, Woodhouse (1912) 240–242, who describes the cave as "a natural tunnel, pierced through an angle of the cliff," and "with a single visible entrance"; Dale (1956) 104–106 (repr. in Dale 1969); Inoue (1979) 226n30; OKell 1999; contra Robinson (1969) 34–37, who argues that both mouths of the cave were visible on stage; Linforth (1963) 97n2. Kamerbeek (1980) 29 *ad* 16–19 inclines toward Woodhouse's view, "without feeling absolutely sure about it."

[19] The cave of the nymphs caught the attention of ancient commentators, most conspicuously in Porphyry's extended allegorical interpretation. Webster (1974) 80 *ad* 144 suggests an allusion to the cave of Polyphemus in *Odyssey* 9.182, which is also said to lie at the edge of the shore.

surprise appearance *ex machina* at the end of the play, and something too of the mystery of mankind's relationship to the gods generally.

In the *Prometheus Bound* attributed to Aeschylus, but very likely edited and produced by his son under the father's name (see West 2000), the feature that dominated the stage in the original performance was doubtless the rock to which Prometheus was bound. Like the bow in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, this bit of scenery is necessary to the plot, and whatever implicit meaning its looming presence suggested was a by-product of its function in the story. But there is another striking visual element in the play that has no such integral role, and perhaps was incorporated not just for shock effect—though it may have had this too—but for its symbolic significance. I am referring to the "swift-winged bird" (πτερυγωκῆ … οἰωνόν, 286), which, guided by thought alone, draws the chariot of Oceanus as he enters, very likely swung in on the crane that was used for such epiphanies (so the scholia *ad* 284b).[20] There is no precise indication of the nature of this creature, but the scholia (*ad* 284a) affirm that it is the γρύψ or griffin, a birdlike but four-legged animal, and most swift.[21] If so, we may imagine that it anticipates the later appearance of Io, a woman bearing horns (κεραστίς, 674) and thus another hybrid creature: doubtless her mask was spectacular. If there was a kind of mirror or echo effect in the representation of mixed species near the beginning and toward the latter part of the play, then it would resemble the way the staff and the wreath are deployed in Sophocles' *Oedipus* and *Philoctetes* respectively—a visual device serving to bind together two crucial moments in the action.

Assuming that Aeschylus (or his son) sought to produce such an impression, we may inquire whether, in addition to the visual responsion, the imagery of hybridization had some deeper connection with the theme of the tragedy (or indeed the trilogy as a whole). In pursuing this possibility, one is led to pile conjecture upon hypothesis, and the result is necessarily speculative at best. But this is an unavoidable hazard in the analysis of *opsis* as a handmaiden to the *muthos*, such as Aristotle (I believe) would have approved, and if nothing else, the effort itself may open up some productive lines of inquiry. More than thirty years ago, I ventured an interpretation of the exchange between Oceanus and Prometheus in the *Prometheus Bound*, according to which Prometheus' recitation of the torments endured by Atlas and Typho served a double purpose (Konstan 1977). On the one hand,

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20 Ed. Herington (1972) 115.

21 Of course, the scholia may be merely reflecting later stage practice, in Hellenistic or later revivals of the *Prometheus*.

Prometheus seeks to convince Oceanus of the futility of appealing to Zeus on his behalf, as Oceanus had offered, since his harsh treatment of Atlas and Typho proves how implacable he is. On the other hand, when the punishments of Atlas and Typho are viewed as pertaining to cosmogonic mythology, we may see in them an allegory of the separation of the cosmos into three zones: heaven, earth, and a fiery nether world. No one could desire the abolition of this new order—that Atlas should shrug off his burden, or that Typho should engulf the world in flames. Prometheus is thus delivering to Oceanus a lesson about how the world necessarily evolves: there is violence, to be sure, in the separation of the elements and the achievement of a stable arrangement under the aegis of Zeus, but this is the price of progress. I argued further that Prometheus' own suffering might be assimilated to this larger pattern: Zeus' tyranny itself is a stage in the movement by which society has achieved a proper order. For this is how history works, and the Athenian democracy is the end product of struggles among beings who "fight for their partial goals and strive in the heat of passion for victory more than harmony" (Konstan (1977) 71). Monsters such as the griffin or hippocamp and Io, half woman and half cow, are a sign of the primordial confusion of elements, before the law of Zeus has been fully realized. In the end, as Prometheus himself prophesies, Zeus will sort out the social world, and become reconciled with Io and with Prometheus, just as he separated earth from heaven and hell. But it will take time, and in the ancient epoch in which the *Prometheus Bound* is set there are still remnants of the primeval confusion. Io is a symbol of this disorder, and of course she is integral to the story. The monster that Ocean drives is, I suggest, another, and serves visually to confirm the persistence of chaos that will only be resolved at the conclusion of the trilogy.

I have been arguing that Aristotle's criticism of *opsis* in tragedy was not a general condemnation of visual effects, but was rather aimed at a tendency to exploit the shock potential of monstrous displays, through masks or other props and elements of costume, that had nothing to do with the pity and fear that were properly aroused by the trajectory of the story or *muthos* as a whole. There is a right use of *opsis*, however, in which visible features on stage serve as motifs that reinforce the plot, condensing an aspect of the action into a vivid symbol. Such images may reappear or find an echo at crucial points in the drama, and thus work like formulaic phrases, linking different episodes in the tragedy. I believe, moreover, that the Greek tragedians did in fact exploit props and other visual effects in this way, and have offered a few possible examples of the technique. Given our limited knowledge of classical staging, particularly with respect to individual plays, not to mention the viewing habits of ancient audiences, there is inevitably a fair amount of guesswork in

the kinds of interpretation I have ventured. Nevertheless, attention to the use of visual details is likely to reveal many more such instances of good *opsis*, and it is my hope in this chapter to have encouraged further investigation along these lines.

GENERALIZING ABOUT PROPS: GREEK DRAMA, COMPARATOR TRADITIONS, AND THE ANALYSIS OF STAGE OBJECTS

Martin Revermann

I. *The Power of Props*

The iconography depicting Telephus taking the baby Orestes hostage at the altar is commonly, and rightly, considered to be theatre-related, inspired by Euripides' *Telephus* tragedy of 438.[1] But what exactly does instil in the viewer a sense of tragedy, both in the sense of a specific type of narrative and a specific kind of theatre? The cues are different ones, and they work cumulatively: movement and proxemics (i.e. the relative position of the figures); the choice of scene; and the match between the visual narrative seen on the vase and the play, the performative narrative that has come down to us as a script. But at least equally crucial cues are provided by the props in this scene: the blood-stained altar and, most of all, the two swords: one about to be drawn by Agamemnon and positioned very prominently in mid-centre of the visual field, the other held less conspicuously but as an equal threat by Telephus. It is those two weapons that vitally contribute to the sense of grave imminent danger that the viewer needs in order to construct the picture as tragic. But their force, in conjunction with the other cues provided in the picture, extends beyond the situational towards the generic: the swords point to tragedy. It is, I believe, not an overstatement to call the sword *the* tragic prop. The so-called "Würzburg actor", that precious sherd which adorns just about any handbook on the Greek theatre, holds a tragic mask in his right hand—and a sword in his left hand, cueing us into realizing that mask and prop in an equal manner indicate and confer his stature as a tragic actor. Embodying as it does a sense of crisis and, at least potentially, lethal violence, the sword captures the essence of tragedy and tragic conflict.[2]

[1] An overview of the Telephus iconography is provided by M. Strauss in *LIMC* VII (1994) 866–868.

[2] When close to a thousand years after those vessels were made and painted Heliodorus opens his monumental novel by zooming in on the enigmatic aftermath of a killing spree at

Evidence from comedy illustrates this point even more clearly. In Aristophanes' *Wasps*, Philocleon asks for a sword in case he gets defeated in the upcoming argument with his son

> And give me a sword. For if I am beaten by you in our argument, I will fall on the sword. (*Wasps* 522f.)

Philocleon's request may or may not be fulfilled. But the issue of physical materialization is, in fact, a secondary one. The sword is so closely associated with tragedy and its world of doom, menace and terminal destruction that its sheer mention suffices to create a paratragic modality which confers to Philocleon the status of a paratragic hero, not dissimilar to the way that significant silence, another feature appropriated from tragedy,[3] evokes a similar modality before (317) and at the end of the *agon* (741). The symbolic power of the sword, then, is so pervasive that it manages to generate theatrical meaning irrespective of its physical manifestation. While a visible sword would add a different sense—material and more permanent—to this modality, the sheer fact that the sword is being called for is enough to generate such a modality in the first place.

Old Comedy, of course, indulges in stage properties which, in conjunction with proxemics, are chiefly responsible for creating the impression of genre-typical busyness. Proxemics and props are in fact linked in the form of the carrier entry which is a standard way of producing a prop on the comic stage. Time and again it is theatre-related vase paintings, indispensable witnesses to the visual poetics of Greek drama, which reveal to us the pivotal importance of props to comic playwriting: in the "Goose Play" vases, for instance, appropriately named after what quite certainly was the prop of the play (possibly together with the stick).[4] Or they may bring home to us just how central a prop we see mentioned in a script actually is in performance. The now-famous "Würzburg Telephus" crater with its parody of the Telephus scene (discussed at the beginning of this paper) shows five (!) props: a large wine jar, a wine skin, the little boots for that wine-skin, the blood-stained altar—and, of course, the big kitchen knife at the very centre. This, a domestic and mundane object, is what the grand sword of the tragic Telephus has morphed into in the hands of a comic playwright who pursues a strategy entirely characteristic of comedy: deflate in status

the beach, he configures his protagonists, Theagenes and Charicleia, as a tragic tableau—with her holding a sword (Heliodorus 1.2).

[3] Discussed for tragedy by Taplin (1972).

[4] Taplin (1993) 11.3 and 10.2 with pp. 30–32.

(sword becomes house knife) and inflate in size (make the knife a big one!).[5] This prominence in comedy does not mean that tragedy, or satyr play for that matter, dismisses props as secondary or superfluous. On the contrary: the urn in Sophocles' *Electra* is a very well-known example (to which I will return), and the lyre in Sophocles' satyr play *The Trackers* (*Ichneutai*) may well have occupied a similarly prominent postion. The difference, rather, is one of quantity and concentration. Comedy with its short attention-span devotes less time individually to a greater number of props while tragedy, once choosing to dwell on a particular physical object, will not easily loosen its grip.

II. *A Broader Approach*

At this point, adopting a broader approach—broader in theoretical and cultural terms by widening the disciplinary perspective through integrating Theatre Studies and the (highly selective) analysis of other performance traditions (including non-Western traditions and inter-cultural theatre)—will help throw the use of props in ancient theatricality into different relief. This digression deserves its name only in so far as I will briefly turn away from the ancient theatre while the focus on stage objects is being maintained. Taking such a side-step is necessary, because it will help deepen the analysis of props in the ancient theatre which informs the final two sections of this paper.

The theoretical concepts that feed into my analysis are chiefly borrowed from semiotics and, to a smaller extent and less overtly, psychoanalysis.[6] The applicability of semiotics to the analysis of stage objects is hardly surprising, since props self-evidently function as communicative systems in their own right. The use of psychoanalysis, on the other hand, is in need of further comment, since I have no intention at all to read a psychoanalytical

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[5] The huge dung beetle in *Peace* operates along a similar paratragic strategy of combining a deflation in status (Bellerophontes' horse becomes a dung beetle) with an inflation in physical size.

[6] There is a surprising shortage in Theatre Studies of work dedicated solely to props, in whatever historical period and theatrical context. The best and most incisive discussions known to me are a more general one, the inspiring chapter on stage objects in McAuley (1999) 169–209, and Sofer's case-study oriented monograph on the "stage life" of props (Sofer 2003). Neither of these discusses props of the ancient Greek or Roman theatre. For Greek tragedy the case studies discussed in Taplin (1978) 77–100 are highly stimulating. Chaston (2010) pursues a cognitive approach to props in tragedy.

dimension into Greek theatre (or any theatre, for that matter). Instead, my interest is entirely utilitarian: I believe that aspects of psychoanalysis illustrate quite well the theatrical dynamics of props as I see them, namely as visualized mini-narratives in their own right, as stage objects with “stories to tell”. They therefore make a particularly strong appeal to audience collusion, collaboration and, most importantly of all, imagination, which I consider a key dimension of the ancient Greek theatre. And it may well be this strong imaginative appeal of props which ultimately accounts for why psychoanalytical dream analysis can be so illuminating for analysing stage objects. After all, dreams, like theatre, are exceptionally creative acts of human self-expression: highly visual, intensely emotional, fully dramatized and lavishly theatricalised.

As detached (or detachable) and tangible physical entities of some durability, props tend to have a continuity and presence on stage not normally shared by more ephemeral elements of theatrical communication such as words or gestures. The power of props resides not least in the fact that, qua not being based on verbal codes, they are immensely communicable, more communicable in fact than language itself. As a rule of thumb, every spectator understands, or thinks that he or she understands, props. The codes generated by props as communicative systems are universally decodable, at the level of denotation, connotation and annotation alike: a table is a table, a sword is a sword.[7]

But while this may be a useful initial working hypothesis, instances where this working hypothesis breaks down are highly illuminating. In the production of Euripides’ *Medea* by the Japanese director Yukio Ninagawa, which was originally conceived in 1978 for a Japanese audience and then toured the world for just over 20 years playing to most diverse audiences, elements from the Greek and the contemporary Western theatre were interwoven with features of the Japanese theatre traditions *Noh, Kabuki* and *Bunraku* (Japanese puppet theatre).[8] This strategy of cross-cultural theatrical fusion was, for instance, evident in Medea’s final exit on the chariot where the corpses of Medea’s two boys were represented by two white

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[7] For an introduction to theatre semiotics as applied to the ancient Greek theatre see Revermann (2006a) 25–45. A useful introduction to semiotics and semiotic concepts in general is Chandler (2007), while Danesi and Perron (1999) apply semiotics more broadly to Cultural Studies.

[8] Smethurst (2000) and (2002) are two excellent discussions which contextualize this important production within traditional Japanese theatrical culture(s).

Bunraku puppets. The disembodiment implied in the transfer of human beings into inanimate puppets—props, in other words—resulted, among other things, in a sanitized representation of the infanticide, a downplaying of cruelty which was in keeping with the production's overall agenda of staging Medea as a victim and triumphant avenger of patriarchy rather than a scheming barbarian witch with criminal energy. The white colour of the *Bunraku* puppets echoed the earlier scenes of the play when the boys had also been dressed in white while playing with their mother Medea.[9] It is the white colour of these puppets as props which deserves attention: for a Western audience member the whiteness of the boys' costume signals angelic innocence, a feature commonly associated with children. For a Japanese spectator, on the other hand, the connotations are quite different ones: not only is the link with a particular genre of the Japanese theatrical tradition instanly obvious to a competent Japanese spectator; more importantly, the colour white in Japanese theatre usually has specific connotations with the super-natural, the divine and the demonic.[10] My point is that this is an instance of *discrepant decoding* of a prop. The puppets which a Westerner is bound to see as 'angels in white' are meant to evoke in the Japanese spectator connotations with the supernatural: the children are doomed spirits, from the very first moment of their appearance to the very end, somewhat eerie beings that are not quite with us and inhabit a transcendent sphere somewhere beyond our reality. To think that the white *Bunraku* puppets as props are easily and universally decodable is a potentially misleading simplification, as it presupposes a universal and all-integrating audience response to a theatrical object which in fact *divides* its audiences along the lines of cultural competence and habituation. In the ancient theatre, I might add, with its culturally and ethnically (as far as we can tell) very homogeneous audiences, discrepant decoding (at the connotational level) is rare and, I would argue, far less pronounced. But it is worth asking whether a statue of Athena (as, for instance, used in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*) would indeed trigger discrepant audience responses at the annotational level: pride, elation and self-assurance from the Athenians in the audience, awe from the allies present, reservedness or even hostility from Spartans, Thebans or Corinthians.

[9] Smethurst (2000) 206 f.

[10] Spectacularly beautiful colour photographs of super-natural Kabuki characters dressed in white can be found in Kawatake (2003) ix and Cavaye (1993) 52.

If, at least as a rule of thumb, props tend to be universally (or near-universally) decodable, this does not, or not necessarily, make props easy to analyse, for the cultural codes evoked by a prop can be very complex ones. Props, as mini-narratives in their own right, are principal focalizers which bundle and condense meaning. They often bring a history to a play, apart from acquiring such while dramatic attention is being lavished on them. Like all theatrical signs, props can, to use semiotic jargon, be polyfunctional as indexical, iconic and symbolic signs (possibly all three at the same time). They are also mobile signs, meaning that they are capable of replacing any other sign system: the waving of a handkerchief, for example, can replace a farewell speech; a Christmas tree on stage may replace any other indication (verbal or non-verbal) that the action takes place during Christmas time, and so forth. Prop-related focalization can be complex and multi-layered. Chekhov's seagull, the importance of which is highlighted not least by lending its name to the play as a whole, aptly illustrates the potential scope of complexities: changing shape in the course of the play (from just-shot-dead to stuffed and monumentalized), it both acquires its own history and establishes histories with several of the characters (Nina, Constantin, Trigorin) who, in a remarkable instance of divergent focalization, relate to the prop differently at different times. Chekhov is, of course, situated at a particularly interesting time for the use of props, the confluence, or clash, of Naturalism and Symbolism, both of which are combined in the *Seagull* (and elsewhere in Chekhov).

The naturalistic stage of the late 19th century indulged in the use of props, since they could be used to great effect in order to create a sense of environment, milieu and social situation which is crucial to the naturalistic project of uncovering and theatricalizing the dynamics of social formation. Here, stage properties become far more than secondary meaning-generating systems, as is implied by the term "properties/props" (suggesting an adjunct of some sort) and even more so by its French equivalent "accessoire". Props evolve into being used as primary vehicles for generating theatrical meaning, in the absence of which the plays start losing their point. They condense and bundle (or focalize) complex sets of assumptions and ideologies. Symbolist theatre, too, tends to utilize props as primary meaning-generating systems of some complexity, with the additional aspect that the symbolically used prop displaces meaning from one realm of meaning and reference to another. The Chekhovian seagull or Ibsen's wild duck are well-known cases in point, even if neither playwright is commonly given the label "symbolist". Twentieth-century Western theatre certainly saw the rise of the theatrical object, especially in so-called "post-dramatic theatre", which deprived "text" and

"plot", as drivers of the "dramatic", of their supremacy and replaced them with discontinuous, disjointed and fragmented enactments of raw theatricality to which physical objects add a forceful material presence.[11]

The most interesting and relevant comparator tradition in this context, however, is Japanese *Noh* theatre. As far as props are concerned, the Noh stage itself is uncluttered and "clean". But this only serves to highlight the importance of two key props, at least one of which is featured in very many Noh plays. The first is the wide-spread use in Noh of simple rectangular frames, classified as *tsukurimono* = "assembled thing" or, specifically associated with the principal actor (*shite*), as *torii*.[12] As props and sign systems, these frames are just about as polyfunctional and mobile as can be: they may, for instance, represent a palace, a carriage, a grave mound or a hut—just about anything, in other words, a human being can stand on, sit in or move with. With this peculiar rectangular structure we are arguably moving beyond the symbolic into a theatre of pure abstraction and imagination. The second key prop in Noh is the fan, an extraordinarily beautiful and flamboyant stage object. For the main actor (*shite*) in particular it is a principal means of expression, since dance movements conducted while carrying the fan can symbolize a wide range of activities and emotional states (like joy or sleeping).[13] Naturalistic props, i.e. objects that actually represent on stage exactly what they represent off stage, are in fact rare in Noh, the most memorable one being a huge bell that is the central prop of the Noh play *Dojoji* (in the play's signature scene the *shite* has to jump under the massive bell as it falls to the ground).[14]

III. *Situating the Use of Stage Objects in the Greek Theatre*

If there is, then, a continuum of sorts in the handling of stage objects between the extremes of symbolist compression on the one hand and naturalistic exuberance on the other, trying to situate within this continuum (very much at the macro-level) the use of props in the ancient Greek theatre of the 5th and 4th centuries is a worthwhile and illuminating exercise. There is no reason to believe that Greek theatre, in this or in other aspects, was ever

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[11] The seminal book on the post-dramatic is Lehmann (1999), available in English in a somewhat abbreviated version (Lehmann 2006).

[12] Keene (1966) 85–87 (with the illustrations on pp. 228 f., 237, 241 f., 245, 252 f., 260, 267, 269) and Komparu (1983) 253–256.

[13] Keene (1966) 86 f. (with the illustrations on pp. 219–222).

[14] Keene (1966) 228.

remotely as symbolist or abstract as Japanese *Noh*. Not a single stage object used in the evidence of the preserved plays, including the *mēkhanē* and the *ekkyklēma*, has quite the mobility and polyfunctionality of the fan or the rectangular frame in *Noh*. Nor is there evidence to suggest, or reason to believe, that dance in Greek drama was ever as symbolic and stylized as it can be on the *Noh* stage. That said, props on the Greek stage can be highly charged with complex meaning, including symbolic meaning. The purple cloth in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*—quite possibly the best-discussed and most thoroughly scrutinized stage object of the ancient theatre—is an elaborate and stunning visual mini-drama in its own right, symbolic of the wasteful shedding of royal blood that has occurred so far and will continue.[15] On a less flamboyant scale, Philoctetes' bow is surely not only a tool of martial aggression and a means for survival on a deserted island but also, in the hands of Neoptolemus, indicative of an adolescent's initiation into the adult world and the complexity of moral choices that have to be confronted in that world.

With naturalist theatre, on the other hand, the Greek stage shares a predilection for the clustering of objects and the use of objects in their non-symbolic real-life function (a shield is a shield, and a pot is a pot). While this is self-evidently true of the Greek comic stage, the situation in tragedy is, I believe, more differentiated. Clusters of objects, it would seem to me, are rare in tragedy. Or, put more accurately and cautiously, they rarely get the kind of textual attention—the only guideline we have in the absence of stage directions—which clustered objects can get in comedy (the Agathon scene in *Thesmophoriazusae* is a good example). It also seems to be the case that among the tragedians Euripides, not exactly surprisingly, had a particular fondness for putting ordinary objects to ordinary use on the tragic stage: the broom which Ion uses to sweep the ground with or the baby boy (surely represented by a prop) who is being lulled to sleep in the *Hypsipyle* (fr. 752 f. Kannicht) are hard to imagine in Aeschylean or Sophoclean drama.

But the Greek stage never was, and could never possibly have been, naturalistic: an outdoor environmental theatre of significant dimension precludes in principle the creation of a naturalist or a realist stage.[16] And those

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[15] The most perceptive discussions of this scene continue to be those by Taplin (1977b) 308–316 and (1978) 78–83.

[16] It is significant that in the *Preface to Miss Julie* (1888), arguably the most important (and best-known) naturalist manifesto, Strindberg emphasizes that the naturalist theatre he envisions calls for a small and intimate stage. Strindberg's short-lived own theatre in Stockholm was indeed called the "Intimate Theatre", and the interest of naturalist theatre in the room as

physical conditions meant that the "theatricality of the theatre", i.e. the fact that it is an artificial construct rather than some replica of real life, was always fully exposed and laid bare: among many other things, the omnipresence of the chorus and the ornately dressed *aulos* player, the use of theatrical machinery like the *mēkhanē* or *ekkyklēma* in full view of the audience or the presence of stage hands to remove props (mentioned right at the beginning of the parabasis of *Peace*) all attest to that fact quite vividly. It is not at all trivial to note in this context that the sheer size of the ancient theatres meant that no playwright or actor could take it for granted that everyone in the audience would in fact even be able to see all stage objects in sufficient detail (not to mention that no visual aids were available to the ancient spectator). This may well be one of the reasons why props are regularly dwelt on in the scripts themselves: in this kind of theatre stage objects *need* text in order to catch an audience's attention and to acquire the theatrical significance that the playwright wants to invest them with.

IV. *Visual Narratives with "Stories to Tell"*

As visual mini-narratives with "stories to tell" props on the Greek stage exist both in the visual and in the narrative dimension. Their analysis is consequently situated within an interesting nexus of visual, performative and textual poetics. The urn in Sophocles' *Electra* illustrates those interconnections in an exemplary fashion. This stage object is an alternate narrative which is deceitfully counterfactual: "what if Orestes were dead?" is the question it poses to anyone who is exposed to it (including the audience), and this question leads to discrepant decoding (this time among characters). The urn provokes and explores the (largely bipolar) reactions to this counterfactual scenario of Clytemnestra (joy), Electra (destitution), the chorus (horror) and Aegisthus (skeptical curiosity) respectively. The prop thereby turns into a complex emotional focalizer of significant emotional impact, dramaturgical relevance and performative power, to be watched unfold by those who have superior awareness of actual reality (Orestes is alive), i.e. Orestes, Pylades and the audience (but not the chorus).

As objects to be seen props are singled out—in a theatre with no artificial lighting and no spot-light effect—by leaving their mark in the script and/or

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a setting which articulates environment and becomes a *dramatis persona* in its own right is well known. This and other features are discussed in Williams (1977), a stimulating reflection on key aspects of naturalism/realism.

by being brought on stage, often with entertaining unpredictability as part of a carrier entry. But despite the narrative, dramaturgical and performative pre-eminence of props ancient playwrights, for all we can tell, hardly ever exaggerate the physical dimensions to highlight their significance. Outsize props do occur, especially in comedy: the net in *Wasps*, the scales in *Frogs*, possibly the statue of Peace in *Peace*, and probably a few props in those plays that underlie a number of South Italian vase paintings (the huge stage egg for a comedy on the birth of Helen, for instance).[17] But even comedy usually respects the physical reality in its representation of props. This is perhaps surprising in a genre which in other areas is hooked on exaggerating physicality by giving its male characters big bottoms and grotesquely large leather phalloi, and which loves to outsize, transgress and "think big" conceptually: ride up to heaven (on a huge dung beetle, of course!) to bring down Peace. Or why not found a new city in the sky? In tragedy, outsize props were, presumably, used extremely rarely, if ever (the scales used in Aeschylus' (lost) plays *Psychostasia* or *Phrygians* come to mind as possible instances). Their regular size is not tantamount to inconspicuousness. Statues in particular can have a very palpable on-stage presence: the statues of Aphrodite and Artemis look on, like an internal audience, as Hippolytus experiences his downfall, with Artemis finally appearing in person at the very end. Throughout Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, the statue of Apollo has an eerie presence (which is often overlooked).[18] As material objects props create spatial relationships and sub-spaces, and help to define character (what does the urn tell us about Electra, for instance?). They can invest any scene with a specific modality, be it of a ritual nature (as in the case of divine statues) or a metatheatrical nature (the tragic connotations of the sword or the shield, for instance).

Most striking of all, however, are the relationships established in the Greek theatre between physical objects and plot. Every prop, of course, has a diachronic narrative dimension with its own past, present and future. But it seems to me that, for example, the omnipresence of the statue of Apollo in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* comes close to introducing a sub-plot to the play, if only by allusion. It at least hints at the fact that Apollo has been the prime mover for everything we see unfold within this play (which feels extraordinarily compressed even by the standards of Greek tragedy), and that everything in the play will eventually move back towards

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17 Revermann (2006a) 244–246.

18 Iocasta sacrifices at this statue (*OT* 919 f.), and its continuous presence is implied. On the significance of this prop see also Liapis (2012) 94.

him. What is, however, truly remarkable about the relationship between narrative and prop in Greek drama is that a significant number of props, certainly in tragedy, only exist in narrative and never physically materialize on stage. Who *sees* the noose with which Iocasta hangs herself, or the chariot on which Hippolytus dies? The long eyewitness narratives that are so characteristic of Greek tragedy feature a wide array of props. Given the nature of those eyewitness narratives, many of those props are associated with violence, often spectacularly so. These props are wholly imaginary in the sense that they never physically materialize.[19] But they are not imaginary in the sense that they do not exist, or only exist as something ephemeral, perfunctory or evanescent. Quite the contrary: by appealing to the audience's imagination—by forcing, even, the spectator to re-create them, individually, in their own "theatre of mind"—these imaginary stage objects have a presence that arguably engages the spectator *even more* than a prop that is visible on stage. The necessity for their imaginative materialization in the mind(s) of the spectator(s) engages, involves and not least empowers the onlooker in extraordinary ways (Shakespearean drama, staged in its original context, may be the only true comparator here). Props may be seen as the

[19] It is, however, worth mentioning that props invoked in eyewitness narratives do materialize on theatre-related vase paintings, which regularly depict off-stage action. Moreover, there may have been cases where the crucial prop of an eyewitness narrative (the murder weapon, for instance) was being presented to the audience in the subsequent revelation scene. The cloth in which Agamemnon was caught to be killed was re-used by Orestes and appears to have been presented to the audience twice, after each murder (the implication of *Ch.* 980, see Taplin (1977b) 358 *pace* Garvie (1986) 320). Also, the sword with which Agamemnon is killed (*Ag.* 1262 f. and 1529) may have materialized on stage later on, although the argument against Clytemnestra holding that murder weapon is a strong one: she herself points to her right hand, and not the murder weapon, as having accomplished the bloody deed (1405), and the contrast with Aegisthus who needs guards to protect him with their swords (1651) seems deliberate. Clytemnestra, in fact, appears to be associated with the axe rather than the sword (*Ch.* 889), and the sparse surviving iconography of the actual murder, some of which may actually pre-date the *Oresteia*, shows her not as the primary killer (and not even necessarily armed), see Easterling (2005) 33–36 and Hall (2005) 57–61. In the corresponding scene of the *Choephori* where the bodies of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra are being presented, Orestes the avenger probably did hold the murder weapon (possibly from as early on as *Ch.* 892), even if it is not mentioned until the beginning of *Eumenides* when Orestes is being described as (still?) holding on to it (*Eum.* 42): the effect of the perpetrator being "glued" to his murder weapon certainly seems too good to miss out on. In Sophocles' *Electra*, by contrast, the logic of the revenge trap set by Orestes requires the absence on stage of any weapons or other murder-related props. The situation in Euripides' *Electra* is not entirely clear. Electra specifically emphasizes that during the actual killing they were both pushing the sword (1221–1226), but nothing in the script points to the murder weapon's visibility later on. The preserved text, however, is lacunose at a decisive moment (1177–1181, Orestes' first words when entering after the murder).

preserve of the actors who hold them, the directors who stage them and the playwrights who invent them. But their potential is only fully actualized at the very moment when they start to communicate with their audiences, who have eyes, and minds, to see.

ACTORS' PROPERTIES IN ANCIENT GREEK DRAMA: AN OVERVIEW[*]

Rob Tordoff

It is a surprising fact that in the index of Pickard-Cambridge's massive *chef d'oeuvre*, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, not a single reference to props (or properties) is to be found. The intellectual history behind this extraordinary blind-spot in the study of Greek theatre need not concern us here;[1] for the present, it will be enough to point out that to performers and directors of drama in the ancient Greek world stage properties were a matter of concern, even if they have not attracted much concentrated attention in modern studies of Greek theatre.[2] The papyrus document *P. Berol.* inv. 13927 contains a list of properties required for the staging of a series of mimic

* I would like to thank the editors and the anonymous referee for helpful comments and suggestions. Any and all remaining shortcomings are mine. I am also very grateful to a number of contributors who were kind enough to share their chapters with me: R.C. Ketterer, David Konstan, G.M. Sifakis and Rosie Wyles.

1 For the reasons for critical inattention to props in recent theatre scholarship (in particular, the idealization of the allegedly 'bare stage' of Shakespeare), see Harris and Korda (2007) 2–11.

2 Misunderstanding of Aristotle's *Poetics* on the subject of *opsis* (spectacle) is in no small measure to blame here (for corrective discussions, see Konstan and Sifakis in this volume). It is frequently held that Aristotle thought the visual aspects of theatre to be relatively unimportant, ranking them low among the 'six parts' of tragedy (1450a7–10), describing them as of least concern to the art of the poet (1450b16–17), and making them the responsibility of the *skeuopoios* (1450b20), probably meaning primarily a 'mask-maker' as in Ar. *Eq.* 232 (but if the term *skeue* may not also cover costumes and props, it is difficult to see what would; cf. Konstan in this volume). As Sifakis (this volume) shows, the key to the problem is that Aristotle conceptualizes the work of the poet as an art (*techne*) and distinguishes it from the (in some cases 'inartistic') business of other theatre practitioners, among them the *didaskalos* or producer; the *Poetics*, then, is not the place to expect analysis of these aspects of dramaturgy. There are hints in the evidence of a lost play by the comic dramatist Plato that ancient theatre practitioners treated props with considerable theoretical sophistication. It is not clear whether the title, *Skeuai*, is best translated as *Masks*, *Costumes* or *Props*, but Pirotta (2009) 272 argues for the last. Of the meagre fragments, only 142 K-A appears to say anything much about props (contrasting Euripides' scripting of an actor, possibly playing Electra, carrying a water jug with the idea of an actor carrying a pot of hot coals), but the text is badly corrupt. Nevertheless, the mere fact that Plato wrote such a play at all suggests a highly developed interest in this otherwise neglected aspect of performance.

performances.[3] The list of the requisite items of scenery, costume, and props is a rich array of the material stuff of the stage. Admittedly, the document is not a list of items required for a tragic or comic performance, and in date it is very distant from the theatre of classical Athens, but such lists must have been made for all types of dramatic performance in antiquity over the centuries, since when a play is to be performed someone must undertake the humble task of deciding what *things* will be needed for performance and must go about acquiring them.

This paper does not pretend to survey all the ground left untouched by classical scholarship in the matter of stage properties. That is the task of a book that has yet to be written. Equally, the terrain is not entirely *terra incognita*, since valuable information on props in tragedy and in Aristophanic comedy is to be found in two unpublished doctoral theses and a handful of articles by two scholars, Joachim Dingel and Mary C. English, as well as in remarks in more general works on performance, staging and costume.[4] In some respects, the survey of the evidence for fifth-century (and some early fourth-century) Athenian drama is already quite well advanced, but it is not widely known, nor easily accessible. To my knowledge, there is no general or synoptic account of Menander's props; I have attempted a few steps towards ameliorating this particular situation below.[5]

I might as well admit at this point that little of what I say will not seem obvious to some reader somewhere; after all, the findings I present are accessible to all sensitive interpreters of Greek drama and students of the archaeological and visual-culture material for Greek theatre practice (in this

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3 Csapo and Slater (1994) 378. I have borrowed the point made here from Marshall (2006) 72.

4 Dingel (1967), (1971); English (1999), (2000), (2005), (2006/2007). For tragedy, Taplin's ((1978) 77–100) discussion of 'Objects and tokens' subsumes remarks on costumes, scenery and props. For Aristophanes, Stone (1981) 244–259 gives a useful overview of the most common 'accessories', but the limits of her study are clear in the very cursory discussion of one-off accessories used for special effects on pp. 257–259; Poe (2000) 283–287 makes excellent remarks on the uses of props in Aristophanes, and in the appendix on pp. 292–295 usefully catalogues objects removed and introduced by mute extras. However, none of the work mentioned offers systematic analysis or documentation of the props required by any individual play; nor, for that matter, does a manual of performance of classical theatre such as Walton (1987). Hughes (2012) provides detailed discussion of comic costume and much besides, but makes almost no mention of props. For excellent examples of what detailed attention to props has to offer the interpretation of an individual drama, see Ketterer (this volume) on Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians* and Raeburn (2000) on Euripides' *Electra*. For a good overview of the material aspects of ancient Greek and Roman performance, see Ley (2007a).

5 There are some good remarks in Ley (2007a) 279–281.

case, principally decorated vases and terracotta figurines, but also media such as relief sculpture and mosaics). I have persisted because the widespread inattention of classicists to stage properties in Greek drama seems to me unjustified, especially in light of the painstaking, methodical groundwork that has already been carried out by the scholars mentioned above. In drawing heavily on unpublished material, this essay aims less to pioneer new ground than to adumbrate for the reader a preliminary cartography, in the hope that it will pique interest and encourage further exploration. With its focus on actors' properties (for what is meant by this term, see the discussion below) the analysis presented here is far from a full investigation of all material objects used in the performance of Greek drama and may perhaps seem idiosyncratic to some readers. However, I hope by restricting the terms of inquiry to make meaningful comparisons across the theatre practice of the fifth and fourth centuries, between tragic drama and the comedies of Aristophanes and Menander.

The use of props in theatre performance can be analyzed in two fundamental ways: quantitatively and qualitatively. A quantitative analysis catalogues the props required for (or known to have been used in) the performance of a given dramatic text and reveals the comparative level of 'materiality' of the stage production and the kind of props that a playwright brings on to the stage most frequently. Qualitative analysis pursues a range of second-order questions, interrogating indices of meaning such as the social-symbolic qualities of the objects found in performance. This essay deals almost exclusively with the elementary, quantitative analysis, but in the closing remarks I suggest a few directions in which a qualitative, 'materialist' analysis of props might be developed.

Before any analysis of props may be attempted, the researcher requires a working definition of what a prop is. Over the years a number of definitions have accrued to the terms 'prop', 'hand prop', 'property', 'stage property' and so forth.[6] One of the earliest studies of props in Renaissance theatre, Felix Bosonnet's *The Function of Stage Properties in Christopher Marlowe's Plays*, defines a prop as 'any portable article of costume or furniture, used in acting a play'.[7] Arriving at the question from the study of gesture in Shakespeare, David Bevington sees props as 'appurtenances worn or carried by actors'.[8] Although Bevington's definition is narrower than Bosonnet's, the two taken

[6] Cf. the useful discussion of Teague (1991) 1–2.

[7] Bosonnet (1978) 10.

[8] Bevington (1984) 35.

together show just how difficult it is to separate props from all the other *things* on the stage; it is all too easy to blur props into the background or the scenery of a play or to bundle them off into the tiring house along with costumes.[9]

The central difficulty here is that finding an acceptable definition of props depends on the questions which are to be asked about them. Under a materialist analysis of the kind illustrated for Renaissance theatre by the essays in Harris and Korda's *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, a broad definition is logical: if the focus is on objects, their materiality, the frequency of their stage appearances and their 'cultural biographies',[10] then every single object on the stage—costume and scenery included—is important. The authors duly specify that, for their purposes, the term 'stage property' shall embrace '*all* the moveable physical objects of the stage'.[11]

Here, a semiotic approach such as that applied to the theatre of Plautus by Robert Ketterer is extremely useful for sharpening distinctions.[12] All props, like all the objects on stage, have a basic denotative function; upon this foundation, further (connotative) functions may be built.[13] In the language of theatre semiotics, the denotative function of a prop is to represent an object in the fictively constructed world of the play.[14] Every object placed on the stage appears to the audience as a *sign* of some thing in the fictive world of the play.[15] The signified may be more or less close in appearance to the sign:

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9 Cf. Kowzan (1968) 68, who sees a greater difficulty with the distinction of props (accessories) and scenery (decor) than with that of props and costume: 'Any element of costume can become an accessory as soon as it plays a particular role independent of the semiological functions of clothing ... On the other hand, the frontier between the accessory and the decor is sometimes hard to define.' Indeed, Kowzan does not attempt to define it.

10 For the term 'cultural biography', see Kopytoff (1986).

11 (2002) 1.

12 Ketterer (1986a), (1986b), (1986c). Compare Revermann's ((2006a) 39–40) discussion of index, icon and symbol.

13 Cf. Ketterer (1986a) 207.

14 The use of the term 'denotation' in the context of the theatrical meaning of props is importantly different from that in general use in semiotics. There, denotation is the conceptual meaning specified by the relationship between signifier and signified. For example, the signifier 'table' does not gesture towards any particular table in the real world, but instead points to the concept of a class of items of furniture which language users recognize as possessing a cluster of distinctive qualities consistent with being a table. Cf. Danesi and Perron (1999) 80–81. In theatre semiotics, the denotative meaning of a prop is the object *in the world of the play* which it represents. Performance provides the context in which the audience will understand, for example, that a wooden sword is lethally sharp blade and not a wooden sword.

15 Cf. Elam (1980) 7.

for example, a wooden sword on the stage may represent a real sword in the world of a play; equally, it might represent a wooden sword in the world of the play; but in either case it is a sign.[16]

Ketterer suggests that where 'a prop has only a denotative function, it is essentially scenery. It is there to lend verisimilitude to the scene and completes the stage picture' (1986a: 207). Some props have further connotative functions: 'labelling' an actor or a scene, or serving a 'symbolic' function (1986a: 208).[17] For example, the stick in Greek drama frequently labels a character walking with it as old (e.g. Aesch. *Ag.* 75); a lamp labels a scene as taking place either in a dark interior or at night (e.g. Ar. *Nub.* 7, *Eccl.* 1–22). A symbolic function of a prop is a further step from relatively concrete connotations of time, place, circumstances, or character to connotation of abstract concepts.[18] The urn in Sophocles' *Electra* (already iconic in antiquity: see Aulus Gellius 6.5) is a celebrated example. The object denotes a funerary urn, it connotes the (false) death of Orestes and may be said, for example, to symbolize deception and the thematic interplay in the drama of the emptiness of words and the desire for concrete action.

Ketterer's definition of props runs as follows: '[Props] are the objects carried on and off stage during the course of the play, and usually, though not always, distinct from costumes and masks which, like scenery, remain permanent for the characters.'[19] The essential point is that props are things manipulated by the actors to create visual meaning (frequently causing them to appear on and depart from the stage) during the performance. This is my preferred definition of a prop for general purposes, but I need to draw a few further distinctions for the special aims of the present discussion.

The following passage from Euripides' *Suppliants* illustrates the problem. In lines 110–111, Theseus asks Adrastus to uncover his head, which is wrapped in his short cloak (χλανίδια), and to answer him, adding a further line of gnomic encouragement; then Adrastus and Theseus speak at length. The obvious way to play the scene seems to be for Adrastus to uncover his head after 112 and greet Theseus in the next line. Subsequently, Adrastus leaves the stage after 777 and re-enters some twenty lines later. His cloak is portable,

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16 Cf. Kowzan (1968) 68–69. For criticism of this approach, see Revermann (2006a) 45.

17 Connotation in the context of props and theatre semiotics presents no confusion of definition with that in general use. Connotation is an extension of the denotative meaning of the sign to embrace further referents that are connected to it by association or analogy. See, for example, Danesi and Perron (1999) 81–82.

18 Ketterer (1986a) 208.

19 Ketterer (1986a) 193.

it is carried on and off stage and the actor manipulates it to create visual meaning; it seems, therefore, to fit the definition of a prop. At the same time, it is a piece of clothing and is being worn, and in that sense it seems to belong to Adrastus' costume.[20] In order to rule out uncertainties of this kind, we require a watertight definition of what a prop is, which will separate it from costume and scenery. What I propose below is complex and artificial, but its aim is to enable comparison across different plays in different genres.

A few prefatory remarks first. It is tempting to think of props as objects with strong connotative functions, and much work touching on props in Greek drama implicitly or explicitly adopts such a definition, focusing only on objects with symbolic functions (i.e. props endowed with the greatest connotative significance) to the exclusion of more mundane objects.[21] The problem begins, in my view, with the distinction between denotation and connotation. I am inclined to doubt that anything on the stage can have only a denotative function; even objects placed in the background carry implications for the audience about the nature of location in which the scene is set (a vase never touched by the actors will appear a more or less rare and expensive piece, for example), and even minor details of costume transmit some information about the character wearing them. This is what Martin Revermann usefully terms the 'semiotization' of the theatre experience: that is to say, the collaborative conspiracy of communication between actors and audience in which all signals emanating from the stage are accepted as deliberate and meaningful by receivers anticipating them as such within the frame established by the performance.[22] Connotative functions may be stronger or weaker, but they are inescapably present.

The weaker the connotative functions of any item are, the greater the temptation will be to assimilate it to scenery or costume. To illustrate with an imaginary example,[23] which has nothing to do with ancient Greek

[20] A closely parallel difficulty is presented by the veil in the analysis of the *Alcestis* below. At 1121 Alcestis' veil must be moved aside or taken off altogether. In the former case it would remain costume, in the latter, if removed by Heracles or dropped by Alcestis herself, it would be counted a prop. Since nothing in the text indicates that the veil is removed rather than thrown back, I assume that it is not.

[21] The bow in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* is a well-known example. See, for instance, Harsh (1960); Segal (1980). An important exception, though still focused on symbolic functions, is the recent work of Colleen Chaston (2010).

[22] See Revermann (2006a) 36, 50–51.

[23] More or less imaginary: something along these lines happens in the opening scene of Federico Fellini's 1957 film *Le Notti di Cabiria*, and a handbag is suddenly snatched

drama, a handbag or purse worn over an actor's shoulder, unopened and unremarked by any character, may send such weak signals (about the gender and social status of the character in most cases) that it will be tempting to categorize it as part of the actor's costume. However, if it is later violently stolen by another actor playing a mugger, it will immediately acquire a new dimension of signifying functions. For example, the stolen handbag ransacked before the audience might connote crime, violence, injustice, the invasion of privacy, or perhaps frustration and failure if it turns out to be empty. Furthermore, as it passes from the possession of one character to the thieving hands of another, it will become indisputably a prop. If this line of argument is sound, props should not be defined exclusively as objects that have strong connotative functions, especially symbolic functions, because they are frequently indistinguishable in kind from other objects on stage until the moment in the drama when the action invests them with greater significance.

I adopt the following definition in this paper. For present purposes, the props considered are actors' props only. Props used by choruses, such as the drums in Euripides' *Bacchae* (59), or the fake beards and sticks of the chorus of Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae*, are choral props; also excluded are props belonging to extras.[24] In the limited space allowed this essay, props other than actors' props will only be discussed in this paper where strictly necessary.[25]

1. *An object or collection of objects that is at any point moved in any way directly or indirectly by an actor on to or off the stage or from one part of the stage to another and is not at the same time being worn is considered*

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and hurled with great force in Yasmina Reza's 2008 stage play *Le Dieu du Carnage*. Doubtless, further parallels could be found.

[24] The numerous props brought on stage in Aristophanes by mute extras at the bidding of the speaking actors do not belong in this category. For discussion of these items, see Poe (2000); cf. Revermann (2006a) 137–139 on 'carrier entries'. Props belonging to mute extras include, for example, the sticks belonging to the old Thebans in the prologue scene of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, as discussed by Konstan in this volume (see next note).

[25] Choral props only appear in a minority of instances. They are important in the development of visual meaning and are indisputably part of the total 'materiality' of the play; in many cases, they serve the same functions in the hands of the chorus as they would in the hands of the actors. The suppliant branches held by the Danaids in Aeschylus' *Suppliants* (21–22, cf. 191–193 etc.) are central to the theme of the play and are also used by one of the actors: at 481–483 Danaus gathers up some of these ritual items to take to the city. Konstan (this volume) demonstrates the importance of props belonging to extras in his discussion of the opening scene of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*.

a prop. To illustrate, a cloak brought by one character and given to another is a prop, while a cloak worn by an actor and thrown over the head in an attitude of grief but never taken off is not a prop but an article of costume. Again, a garland taken from an altar (or a helmet brought by a servant) and placed on an actor's head, whether by the actor himself or another player, is considered a prop. Similarly, a garland or helmet worn when the actor enters the stage but later removed is considered a prop. However, a garland or a helmet worn continuously throughout a scene from the actor's entrance to his exit, even if the actor does not wear it in other scenes, is considered an item of costume.[26] Furthermore, objects fetched or removed at an actor's command are considered actors' props, as are chariots or wagons or other vehicles (and the draught animals pulling them) if they are moved by an actor's volition.[27]

2. *An object or collection of objects carried by an actor but never manipulated in any way is considered a prop if it has some ordinary potential use, which will usually be exampled in another instance in ancient Greek drama*. For example, quivers of arrows worn over the shoulder and swords worn in scabbards on a belt but never put to use in an actor's hands are considered props in view of their potential use paralleled elsewhere in extant Greek drama.[28]

As mentioned above, the questions asked about props have a significant bearing on the definition used. If the methodology and focus of a study of props is developed from the semiotics of theatre performance, then a narrow definition of a prop such as that proposed above is warranted, and the analysis may justifiably zoom in even further, focusing on props that have the most significant impact on the audience, setting scenes, advancing the action, characterizing the *dramatis personae*, or fulfilling a symbolic function. If, on the other hand, the interest is in the total materiality of the stage production, then a more capacious definition may embrace props, costume, and scenery,

[26] The mask is considered part of the actor's costume, except if it is used when not being worn, as at *Bacchae* 1165 where a mask is probably used to represent the Pentheus' severed head.

[27] The term 'hand props' mentioned above is avoided in this essay to allow 'prop' to include such large items as chariots and so forth. Stage machinery, such as the *ekkyklēma*, is not counted with vehicles such as chariots and wagons in the category of props, although it may be moved on the actors' command as the *ekkyklēma* is at Ar. *Thesm.* 265.

[28] They are generally items which are indisputably props in other plays.

in fact everything on stage except the actors' bodies. In the former case, it is likely that the role played by the prop will have left its mark on the text, though that will not always be true, particularly where the scene-setting and characterizing functions are concerned, as the analysis of Euripides' *Alcestis* below demonstrates. By restricting the discussion in this essay (for reasons of space) to props narrowly defined and then again to actors' props, I do not attempt to offer a picture of the total materiality of the ancient Greek stage. In fact, I am not sure that such a project is feasible for ancient Greek drama, lacking the evidence of copious stage directions and contemporary reports of theatrical productions which exist for Renaissance drama, for example. Nevertheless, I do make calculations of the relative 'materiality' of different dramas based on the securest evidence for actors' props found in the texts and in the material-culture evidence.

The 'rate of materiality' is determined by the number of props per one hundred lines of text,[29] excluding all lines given to the chorus. The point of the exclusion of the choral parts is to make possible a comparison of fifth-century Greek drama with the late plays of Aristophanes, which largely lack their original choral lyrics, and with the plays of Menander, which include no lines for the chorus. This procedure, admittedly, involves a certain amount of distortion, but given that the full extent of the lines sung and spoken by choruses after the end of the fifth century are irrecoverable, the method is the best that can be applied to an incomplete set of data. In this essay, I consider only the props of the surviving tragedies of Euripides, including the proto-satyric *Alcestis* among these. For reasons of space I omit the dramas of Aeschylus and Sophocles, which I hope to discuss in a subsequent publication. There is, in fact, no aspect of the uses of props in the extant plays of Aeschylus (excluding the spurious *Prometheus Bound*) and Sophocles which cannot be very closely paralleled in Euripides' practice. Therefore, the results given here constitute a survey of well over half of extant Greek tragedy, and from them some general conclusions may be drawn.

For an illustration of the procedure, we can turn to Euripides' first extant play, *Alcestis* (which, as it happens, has quite a rich list of props and therefore a relatively high level of materiality).[30] The props necessitated by the text of the play are the following:

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29 For the application of the method to Renaissance drama, see Bruster (2002).

30 For Euripides, I have used the OCT (1984) of J. Diggle.

- (#1) Bow, (#2) Quiver and Arrows (belonging to Apollo): line 39, cf. 35.
- (#3) Sword (belonging to Thanatos): line 74.
- (#4) Couch / Stretcher (for Alcestis): line 267, cf. 233.
- (#5) Funeral Bier for Alcestis' corpse (with burial adornment): lines 607–608, cf. 149.
- (#6a, #6b …) Burial 'Adornment' brought by the servants of Pheres: lines 612–613, cf. 631.
- (#7) 'Ivy wood'[31] Drinking Cup (carried by Heracles): line 788, cf. 756.
- (#8) Garland of myrtle (worn and removed by Heracles): line 831–832, cf. 759.

Here we run into a series of problems about what constitutes a single prop. Apollo's bow is a single item and clearly counts as a single prop. The quiver and its arrows presumably consist of at least three separable objects (the quiver and at least two—but probably many more—arrows), but since in *Alcestis* the quiver contains the arrows and the arrows are not at any point in this play taken out of it (as an arrow is, for example, in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* at line 1299), the quiver full of arrows may be said to count as a single prop for the purposes of visual meaning on stage. By analogy, item #5, the funeral bier, may be said to count as a single prop, even though it carries Alcestis' corpse (I assume in this case that the corpse is an actor wearing the mask of the dead queen and dressed in funeral attire, though a dummy for the corpse would be possible); it is also possible that the stretcher and the funeral bier are in fact the same basic object, but in view of the decoration of the bier (mentioned in 149), which will have made it visually distinct, it seems preferable to count two props here. The funerary gifts brought by Pheres represent a more difficult case: since the 'adornment' is carried by servants (plural), and since no single item of funerary decoration could presumably require more than one man to carry it, at least two distinct objects are involved, and there may have been more.[32] Therefore, as the case of Pheres' grave gifts demonstrates, our method of counting props shall aim to establish *minima* of discrete items, or discrete sets of items which belong naturally together, such as pairs of shoes or quivers full of arrows. In this case, the minimum is two. The garland worn by Heracles, under the above definition, would usually be a part of his costume, but since he probably removes it from his head at 832, it is here considered a prop.

[31] For discussion of the etymology of the adjective κίσσινος ('ivy') and the likely appearance of the cup, see Parker (2007) on *Alc.* 756–757.

[32] The funerary gifts are probably such items as flowers, jewellery, ribbons and wreathes: see Parker (2007) on *Alc.* 606, citing Kurtz and Boardman (1971) 144.

A further difficulty arises when we reflect that the list drawn up above only includes props that have made an impression on Euripides' text. It is not unlikely that more props were in fact used in the production than can be located in a close study of the text. There is one certain case. In the fourth book of the *Onomasticon*, Pollux informs us that 'clubs' and 'lion-skins' are standard items of male tragic costume.[33] When Heracles enters at *Alcestis* 476, the Chorus (and no doubt the audience) recognize him instantly (478), presumably because he is wearing a lion skin and carrying a club, just as Dionysus, when disguised as Heracles, must do in Aristophanes' *Frogs* at lines 45–47.[34] However, the text of *Alcestis*, apart from the tiny clue hidden in the fact that the Chorus does not (need to) ask Heracles who he is in order to convey this information to the audience, has left no trace of the prop and the article of costume which were surely required for this scene. It is also very likely that the combative but geriatric Pheres walks with a stick: the staff is a ubiquitous sign of old age and infirmity (not to mention a number of other characteristics including errancy, rustic origins and beggary) on the ancient Greek stage (e.g. Euripides, *Heracles* 254 etc.). If we add the club and stick as props #9 and #10, the total number of eleven props over the number of lines in the play excluding all choral parts multiplied by 100 yields a comparative materiality of 1.4 props per 100 lines in *Alcestis*.

If the analysis is extended to Euripides' surviving tragic dramas, the full set of results is as follows:

33 Pollux, *Onomasticon* 4.117; see Csapo and Slater (1994) 395 for a translation.

34 Numerous early to mid fourth-century Athenian terracotta figurines of a comic Heracles dressed in a lion-skin and carrying his club (and in many cases his bow as well) have been found: see, for the nearest contemporary examples, Webster (1978) AT 11, AT 26, AT 27. For an illustration, see Green and Handley (1995) pl. 34. Similarly, an Attic red-figure vase dating to around 410 depicts a comic Heracles riding in a chariot and carrying club and bow: see Webster (1978) AV 6 (= Louvre N 3408). A phlyax vase from Apulia dated to the second quarter of the fourth century (Trendall (1967) no. 22 = Berlin F 3046) and illustrating a comic Heracles has been connected to this scene in *Frogs*, but it shows Heracles himself, not Dionysus dressed as Heracles; nevertheless, the figure wears a lion-skin and carries the bow and club, which he uses to knock at a door (for an illustration, see Bieber (1961) 133, fig. 487). The non-comic vase painting evidence for Heracles agrees with the vases mentioned in routinely depicting Heracles with his club and sometimes with his bow or a sword as well. See, for example, Beazley (1963) 15 no. 6 (= Arezzo 1465). The evidence supporting the idea of the lion-skin and club as the two basic attributes of Heracles on stage (as suggested by *Frogs* 45–47) seems overwhelming. For full discussion of Heracles' costume and props, see Wyles (this volume).

Play	Props	Props / 100 lines
Alcestis	11	1.4
Medea	3	0.3
Children of Heracles	10	1.1
Hippolytus	7	0.6
Andromache	5	0.5
Hecuba	4	0.3
Suppliants	12	1.1
Electra	17	1.5
Heracles	6	0.6
Trojan Women	15	1.4
Iphigenia among the Taurians	15	1.3
Ion	12	1.0
Helen	18	1.3
Phoenician Women	14	1.0
Orestes	9	0.6
Bacchae	8	0.8
Iphigenia at Aulis	13	1.1

The most common items on the tragic stage are *Weapons and Armour* and *Funerary Items* (grave gifts, biers to carry corpses and so forth). The next most common group is formed of other *Ritual Items*, especially suppliant branches and sacrificial paraphernalia. The data show that in regard to props, Euripides' stage practice remains fairly consistent over the entire span of his career. On average a tragedy uses roughly one prop every hundred lines. A tragic drama with a high number of props may approach a rate of 1.5 props per 100 lines, while at the other end of the spectrum it is not uncommon for a tragedy to have very few props at all (*Medea* and *Hecuba* are performed on the barest of tragic stages).

Turning to comic drama, we find a far greater number and a larger range of different types of prop on the stage of Aristophanes. The construction of a list of props for an Aristophanic comedy, especially for one of his earlier works, is a considerable undertaking. The following list and commentary for the *Knights* (a relatively simple case) illustrates some of the complexities involved.[35]

In the prologue scene the two slaves require (#1) a wine jug (113), (#2) a cup (120), (#3) an oracle text (i.e., a papyrus roll) (116–117, cf. 177) and also (#4)

[35] Compare the analysis of the properties of *Knights* by English (2005) 3 with nn. 17–23. For the text of the play, I have used the OCT (2007) of N. Wilson.

a garland (221), which is worn first by one slave and is subsequently given to the Sausage Seller. The Sausage Seller brings (#5) a table (152, 169, cf. 771, 1165) and numerous items of professional sausage-making equipment, including (#6) 'sausages' (488) and perhaps related ingredients (cf. 160–161, 454–455), (#7a, b ...), a number of knives (489), (#8) a bottle of olive oil (490), (#9) a head of garlic (493), (#10) a meat-hook (772) and (#11) a ladle (922).

Later the Sausage Seller presents Demos with (#12) a cushion (784), (#13) a pair of shoes (872) and (#14) a tunic (883, cf. 886). In response, Paphlagon offers Demos (#15) a garment of some kind, which smells of leather (890–892). Soon afterwards, the Sausage-Seller gives Demos (#16) a jar of ointment (906) and (#17) a hare's tail (909). Demos demands (#18) Paphlagon's signet ring (947) and gives (#19) another signet ring (959) to the Sausage-Seller. At lines 997–1001 the two suitors for Demos' affections each bring out a pile of oracles (#20, #21), read out probably at least four different texts each and either quote others from memory or proclaim them by improvisation (1014–1089). Demos picks up (#22) a stone from the ground (1028). Paphlagon provides (#23) a foot-stool (1164) and (#24) a barley cake (1166). His adversary counters with (#25) a loaf of bread (1168). Paphlagon brings (#26) a pot (1171) of soup and the Sausage Seller produces (#27) a pot (1174) of higher quality soup. Paphlagon offers (#28) some sliced fish (1177), while the Sausage Seller brings out a barrage of food offerings: (#29) a piece of meat out of the soup pot (1178) and (#30, #31, #32) three different types of sausage meat (1179). Paphlagon provides (#33) a flat cake (1182), and the Sausage Seller finds Demos (#34) some more entrails (1183–1184) and a cup (1187) of wine, which may or may not be the same as prop #2 (on the principle of establishing *minima* it should be considered the same). Paphlagon offers a different (#35) flat cake (1190). The hare (#36) served by Paphlagon is stolen by the Sausage Seller (1194–1200) and given to Demos. Each suitor has a (#37, #38) 'hamper' of goodies (1211–1213), originally brought on stage at 1151. Paphlagon wears a special (#39) crown or garland (1227, cf. 1250), which he takes off (and probably gives to the Sausage Seller). A slave boy brings Demos (#40) a stool (1384), and Demos gives the Sausage Seller (#41) a frog-green garment (1406). These items, at a bare minimum, seem to be presupposed by the text. Some plates or pots for the various types of offal, meat, and fish presented to Demos cannot be excluded (four would probably suffice, two each for Paphlagon and the Sausage Seller). There may be more items among the Sausage Seller's equipment, and there may be more food left in Paphlagon's hamper (1218) if the contents of the hamper are to be revealed to the audience, but it is, in my view, impossible to resolve these questions.

A few other items are found in the text, including a special feature of the rejuvenated Demos' costume, a golden cicada brooch (1331) and some pieces of scenery: a harvest wreath on Demos' door (728) and a rock representing the Pnyx (754). Under the definitions given above, these items are not considered props (i.e. they are not moved in the actors' hands on to or off the stage, or from one part of the stage to another). Even assuming that the wine-cup was reused, and assuming only two knives among the Sausage Seller's gear, no meat-hook (the latter is particularly uncertain) and no extra dishes in the food-serving scene, at least forty items of stage property would need to be included on the producer's list. This yields a rate of props per 100 lines of roughly 3.8.

The quantitative analysis may be taken in another direction. For example, if we group the props found in *Knights* into categories of kinds of objects, the following picture emerges.

Kinds of Prop	References (see the list above)	Total Number
Clothes and Accessories	#4, 13–15, 18–19, 39, 41	8
Documents	#3, 20–21	A large number of 'oracles'
Food and drink (including containers of)	#1–2, 6, 8–9, 24–27, 28–38	20
Furniture	#5, 12, 23, 40	4
Luxury Items	#16–17	2
Tools, Utensils and Implements	#7, (#10, 11 excluded)	2 (or more)
Other	#22	1

Perhaps unsurprisingly the category of *Food* probably represents the largest single group of distinct items (though, in terms of raw numbers, there may have been more oracle texts on stage than food items, but it is, in the end, impossible to say). If the oracle texts are excluded, over half the total number of props are comestibles and the associated paraphernalia of cooking and consumption.[36] A distant second comes the category of *Clothes and Accessories*, including the signet rings and garlands.

I cannot here present the full set of data for a qualitative analysis of Aristophanic comedy, but offer the following central facts as an illustration of my findings. In the plays of the 420s, a little over 25% of the props

36 For a sense of the range of different utensils for cooking and eating mentioned in comic texts, see Wilkins (2000) 30–36.

are *Food and Drink*, frequently represented by the vessels in which they are served or contained. The next largest group is made up of smaller *Domestic Items*, followed by *Trade Tools* and *Arms and Armour*. *Ritual Items* and *Clothes* follow close behind, reflecting the importance of scenes of sacrifice and of scenes in which garments are changed on stage.

As Mary English has argued, Aristophanes' dramaturgy reveals a large shift in the use of stage properties over a nearly forty-year career. She counts numbers of props per play and demonstrates on the basis of these figures that there is a significant decline in the number of props from *Acharnians* to *Wealth*. The following table uses English's figures for numbers of props in each play of Aristophanes.[37] As will be made clear below, I do not agree with every detail, but the general picture is basically the right one, and for reasons of space I do not go into detailed discussion here.

Play	Approx. date	Props	Props / 100 lines
Acharnians	425	117	11.7
Knights	424	49	4.7
Wasps	422	51	4.6
Peace	421	53	5.3
Clouds II	419	28	2.4
Birds	416	57	4.4
Lysistrata	412	38	4.0
Thesmophoriazusae	412	52	6.1
Frogs	405	33	3.0
Ecclesiazusae	392	30	2.9
Wealth	388	18	1.6

It is, in fact, true that *Acharnians* is Aristophanes' most prop-filled play and *Wealth* the sparsest; however, an examination of the two late plays of Aristophanes reveals the following picture of the numbers and kinds of props on stage.

Kinds of Prop	*Ecclesiazusae*	*Wealth*	Total
Animals	0	0	0
Agricultural / Industrial / Trade Tools and other Equipment	0	0	0
Clothes and Accessories	12	6	18
Documents	2	0	2

[37] See English (2000) 150 n. 5. Adopting her figures yields a rather different rate of props per 100 lines for *Knights* than the one calculated above.

Kinds of Prop	*Ecclesiazusae*	*Wealth*	Total
Domestic Items (including kitchen utensils)	14	3	17
Food and Drink (and containers of)	0	4+	4+
Furniture	0	0	0
Garlands	2+	2+	4++
Lamps and Torches (or 'Lights')	4+	3+	7++
Luxury Items (excluding clothes)	0	0	0
Money	0	0	0
Ritual Items	2	3+	5+
Weapons and Armour	0	0	0
Walking Sticks	1	3	4
Other	0	0	0
Total props	37+	24++	>60

It is immediately apparent that the number of props representing food has become very small. The visual emphasis on stage is on small domestic items and 'lights' (torches and lamps), while the rest of the material representation of objects on stage is largely given over to clothes and accessories. There is no doubt, as English has shown, that the early fourth-century comic stage is a far poorer place than its fifth-century counterpart, and that, although food is still an important comic theme, it is now represented in words rather than things (a point well made by English (2000) 160–161). Interestingly, and here I depart from English's analysis of the decline of comic props, *Ecclesiazusae* actually involves the actors using about as many props as they do in *Knights*. If the Chorus' props are included, then the total number of props in *Ecclesiazusae* becomes vastly higher, since the Chorus have the same sticks, boots, cloaks and fake beards as the actors and use them in the same ways. Counting in this way, the play actually requires many more props than *Knights*.

The real difference between the late plays and Aristophanes' earlier productions is that the range and variety of objects involved narrows. Even in the 420s Aristophanes wrote comedies such as *Knights* (and probably the original *Clouds* as well) which involved relatively modest numbers of props; it seems to be the case that, in terms of the 'materiality' of stage business, his career saw the rise to prominence of a kind of production involving fewer props, rather than a uniform decline from an abundance of props in every comedy of the 420s to a paucity of props by last years of the fifth century and the early years of the fourth. This should not be taken to indicate that the end of the Athenian Empire had no effect on funding of the dramatic festivals; on the contrary, it seems clear that it did. However, the dramatic form that necessity imposed on a comparatively impoverished city after 404 was not *invented* in response to economic circumstances; it was a kind of

'pre-adaptation' of dramatic form, waiting in the wings to play its part. The category of *Domestic Items* was already a large one in the 420s; in the 390s and 380s it simply became yet more significant by the decline of other kinds of prop on the comic stage.

A quantitative analysis of props on the stage of Menander is seriously impeded by the state of the surviving texts. However, it is possible to construct a list of the bare minimum of props that the texts of *Dyscolus* and *Samia* seem to require. A calculation of the relative 'busyness' of the Menandrian stage meets the obstacle of the small number of texts available for survey and the difficulties of the lacunose state of the better-preserved plays. Nevertheless, the results will be instructive. Simple lists of the props most likely required by the texts are given below.[38] This is the picture in the case of the *Dyscolus*.

Line number	Props	Quantity (minimum)
200	Water jar (*hydria*)	1
375	Mattock	1
393	Sheep	1
405	Rugs	3
433	Pipes (*aulos*)	1
440	Baskets	2
440	Ritual Vessels (*chernibes*)	2
440	Offerings	1
448	Baskets for food	2
448	Wine jars	2
616	Mattocks[39]	2
758	Wheeled couch(?)[40]	1
964	Garlands	3
964	Torch	1

At an absolute minimum the text seems to require a total of twenty-three props. Where any item is mentioned in the plural the minimum number of props that can be assumed is two, but more props are clearly possible in all of these cases. The only instance where a more specific number may be hazarded is at 964, where Getas's request that 'someone go inside and bring

[38] For the plays discussed, I have used the revised OCT (1990) of F.H. Sandbach.

[39] ταῦτ' presumably refers to the two mattocks, but possibly also to other implements carried at this point: cf. Gomme and Sandbach (1973) ad loc.

[40] It is possible that Knemon's words here (εἰσκυ]κλεῖτ' εἴσω με) are a metatheatrical reference to the *ekkyklēma* rather than a direct reference to a wheeled couch, an item which seems somewhat out of place in his austere household.

us garlands' probably means no more than three, one each for Knemon, Sikon and the speaker. In the case of the rugs at line 405, the fictive world of the play clearly requires more than two of them, given the large number of guests expected at the feast; the number that could reasonably be carried by the actor playing Getas will dictate the upper limit, but it is impossible to say what that was because it depends primarily on the size and weight of the rugs used. Sikon's exclamation at line 405 at the number of rugs that Getas is carrying and his command at line 406 that Getas 'pile them up' suggest that the number should be at least three; two rugs hardly make an impressive pile but, nevertheless, cannot be absolutely ruled out. In one further place, it may be possible to reduce the number of requisite items. Knemon's reference at line 448 to the celebrants carrying hampers and wine jars may be entirely an imaginative product of his ornery hyperbole, or may be his uncharitable description of the baskets and the lustral water that have just been mentioned (line 440). If the latter is how the play is staged, the minimum number of necessary props would stand at nineteen; however, given Menander's practice elsewhere (see below), I do not think this assumption can be made with any confidence.

Calculating the frequency of props per hundred lines in *Dyscolus* produces a result of 2.37, counting twenty-three props and 969 lines. In other words, the stage is definitely busier than that of Aristophanes' *Wealth* and closely comparable to that of the second *Clouds*.

Constructing a similar list for the *Samia* yields the following picture of the stage:

Line number	Props	Quantity (minimum)
104–105	Baggage of Demeas and Nikeratos(?)	2
284	Knives	2
283–284	Other cooking equipment(?)	2
297	Basket	1
321–325	Strap	1
373–374	Baby	1
388, cf. 570–578	Stick belonging to Demeas	1
399	Sheep	1
577	Stick belonging to Nikeratos	1
687	Cloak	1
687	Sword	1
730	Ritual vessel for water (*loutrophoros*) (?)	1
730	Pipes (*aulos*) (?)	1
732	Torch	1
732	Garlands	3
Fr.	Incense	1
Fr.	Brazier	1

The minimum number of props for a performance of *Samia* is perhaps as low as eighteen, but the list above contemplates 20–22 items or more. The true figure is probably rather greater—if larger numbers of pieces of Demeas' baggage and of the cooking equipment (presumably) carried by the slaves at lines 283–295 are added (Demeas' slaves are presumably carrying something, and multiple attendants accompany the cook, as is shown by the plural forms used to refer to them at 282 and 295). Although a *loutrophoros* and an aulos-player, presumed to bring pipes, are mentioned in line 730, nothing in the text actually requires the items to appear on stage; but a procession of characters with such effects at the end of a play would not be unusual. As in *Dyscolus*, the assumption is that the garlands called for at the end of the play are given to all three actors on stage (Demeas, Nikeratos, and Moskhion). If the total number of lines in *Samia* as it survives is put at 738 including the one-line fragment containing the references to the incense and the fire, and if the number of required props is put at twenty, the frequency of props per 100 lines is 2.71.

The *Epitrepontes* seems to have had a lighter reliance on props than other Menandrian productions, though the 'exposed child and recognition tokens' plot makes the props which are used of considerable importance and highly memorable.

Line numbers	Props	Quantity
248	Stick	1
363	Bag	1
386	An object set with precious stones[41]	1
386	Axe	1
387	Ring	1
404	Torque	1
404	Crimson cloth	1
867	Baby	1

The surviving lines of the play, including fragments, amount to a little more than 625 lines. The frequency of use of props per 100 lines is 1.28.

In the *Perikeiromene* the picture is closer to that of *Dyscolus*.

[41] The phrase τοῦτὶ δὲ διάλιθόν τι clearly refers to some luxury item set with jewels, but it is not possible to specify what it is.

Line number	Props	Quantity
179	Long cloak (*himation*)	1
291–292	Key(?)	1
354	Short cloak (*chlamys*)	1
355	Sword	1
476	Pipes (*aulos*)	1
756–757	Box	1
773	Piece of woven cloth	1
996	Pig	1
999–1000	Garland	1

The stage appearance of the pig depends on a reference to an earlier missing part of a scene, but animals are not unknown on the ancient Greek stage, and its appearance presents no serious difficulties.[42] The use of a key is not certain, but it seems logical since Daos needs to ask Moschion to open the door. Therefore, the total number of props is probably nine. On the basis of a length of 450 lines, the frequency of use of props is 2.0. The stage is thus busier than that of Aristophanes' *Wealth* and might have been nearly as busy as that of *Clouds*.

Play	Props / 100 lines
Dyscolus	2.37
Samia	2.71
Epitrepontes	1.28
Perikeiromene	2.0

There is, to be sure, a repetitious quality about the props of Menander's drama, but it is noticeable that when the busyness of properties used is calculated, the results show a deployment of props not so very different from that of some Aristophanic comedies. The true number of props used in *Samia* could easily be thirty (or indeed more), if multiple items of baggage and cooking equipment appear in the relevant scenes; if thirty props are assumed for this play, the rate per hundred lines would rise to 4.1, making the complexity of the props list most closely analogous to that of *Birds* and *Lysistrata*.

If we examine the different types of Menander's props, what we find is the following.

42 Arnott (1959) argues that dummies were probably widely used instead of live animals.

Kinds of Prop	*Dyscolus*	*Samia*	*Epitre-pontes*	*Perikei-romene*	Total
Animals	1	1	0	1	3
Agricultural / Industrial / Trade Tools, Equipment	3	0	0	0	3
Clothes and Accessories	0	1	0	2	3
Documents	0	0	0	0	0
Domestic Items (including kitchen utensils)	1	9+++	1	3	14+++
Food (and containers holding food)	4	0	0	0	4
Furniture	1	0	0	0	1
Garlands	3	3	0	1	7
Lamps and Torches	1	1	0	0	2
Luxury Items (excluding clothes)	3+	0	5	0	8+
Money	0	0	0	0	0
Ritual items	5	2	0	0	7
Weapons and Armour	0	1	0	1	2
Walking sticks	0	2	1	0	3
Other	1	2	1	1	5
Total props	23	22	8	9	Over 60

Interestingly, *Domestic Items* stand at almost a quarter of the recorded total. The next largest groups are *Ritual Items* and *Luxury Items*; but these in many cases are also, in a sense, household items (sacrificial items, high-value items belonging to rich households). An important point is the lack of prominence of food items: the significance of these in early Aristophanic Comedy is, as far as we can tell, never replicated on Menander's stage, though the audience hears plenty about food and feasting and sometimes witnesses some of the preparations.

Beyond the foundational work of counting numbers of props and calculating the frequencies with which material objects appear on the ancient Greek stage, qualitative analysis asks questions about the kind of thing that the object is, the kind of thing it represents in the dramatic world of the stage and the symbolic functions of that item in the context of the drama and its genre. Some notable objects on the stage not only draw attention to themselves as objects but echo previous appearances of such props in other plays in a kind of material intertextuality.[43] For example, Clytemnestra's arrival in a chariot in

[43] For discussion, see Carlson (2001), Sofer (2003).

Euripides' *Electra* echoes her late husband's arrival in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*. Furthermore, characterizing stage objects involves a kind of thick-description approach in which in particular the means and methods of their production are uncovered.[44] For example, woven garments on the ancient Greek stage were most likely to be the work of women's hands; Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* once more provides a memorable scene in which this fact is of the greatest importance. Again, vessels of clay inescapably bring into the 'limelight,' so to speak, the skills and talents of an underclass of manufacturers made up of many poorer Athenians, metics and slaves; and when they represent, in addition, the food and drink they contain in the dramatic fiction of the play, they tantalize the audience with the products, luxurious and homely, of the endeavours of the worlds of, among others, agricultural labour, maritime trade and market retail. It is no coincidence that tragedy, for the most part, studiously avoids such items—the sublime aesthetic experience of tragic poetry is not to be interrupted by these lowly material articles, nor the distanced 'heroic' world debased by their presence (thus in *Frogs* Aeschylus mocks Euripides' prologues with the addition of a 'little bottle of oil', not to mention the ridicule of Euripides' props in *Acharnians*). Equally, it is perhaps unsurprising that comedy abounds and rejoices in these humble things.

44 Cf. Ley (2007) 269.

SKENOGRAPHIA IN BRIEF*

Jocelyn Penny Small

From its two root words, *sken-* and *graph-*, *skenographia* literally means "scene painting", which reflected its earliest use. We know that in the first century BC Vitruvius used it in a context which scholars sometimes translate as "perspective". It remains hotly debated whether the "perspective" described by Vitruvius is what we call "linear perspective".[1] It also is unclear what the nature of skenographia was at the time of its birth in the fifth century BCE and where precisely it was placed on the *skēnē* or "stage building". The textual sources are few and widely scattered in date and no uncontested material remains of skenographia exist to supplement that information.

I begin chronologically with our earliest mention of skenographia in the fourth century BCE. Aristotle (*Poetics* 1449a18) says: "Three actors and skenographia with Sophocles."[2] That places the beginning of skenographia

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* This essay is a very much abbreviated discussion of skenographia from my project on optics and illusionism in classical art. It has much fuller arguments than I am able to present here. I am grateful to the two editors, George W.M. Harrison and Vayos Liapis, for their unstinting support. It is with deep gratitude that I thank T.E. Rihll and Susan Woodford for their comments and suggestions. All URLs were accessed in January 2011.

1 Definitions of "linear perspective"—from informal to obtuse—exist. "Linear perspective" may informally be defined as a system of depiction that follows geometric rules to convert a three-dimensional scene to two-dimensions and that reflects "what we see" rather than "what really is". More formal definitions refer to horizon lines and picture planes among other aspects. The "classic" example of linear perspective, taught to most every American school child, shows a road or railroad tracks receding into the distance with the two sides gradually converging on a single vanishing point, even though in reality the two sides are parallel and therefore cannot meet. Moreover, linear perspective applies not only to physical aspects of the setting, but also to every element within a scene including the figures. For a technical treatment, see Willats 1997, especially Chapter Two ("Projection Systems"). For a consideration of the philosophical aspects, including Damisch and Lacan, see Iversen 2005. For the history of linear perspective, see Veltman 2004, especially 82–92 for antiquity. Finally, gargantuan is the only word to describe the amount of scholarship on linear perspective; whereas that on skenographia is merely huge. I make no attempt to be complete even for recent references.

2 My translation. Pollitt (1974) 236–240 provides the best compilation of the literary references in the original Greek and Latin with translations, as well as discussion. Also good on the textual tradition is Camerota 2002. Beer (2004) 26–29 suggests that skenographia is not literally "scene-painting" but rather a verbal description of the setting. He can maintain

in the fifth century BCE.[3] Other later sources (Vitruvius 7, praef. 11) agree on the date in the fifth century BCE, but substitute Aeschylus for Sophocles.

The next citation comes from Polybius in the second century BCE who paraphrases Timaeus: "To glorify history he [Timaeus] says that the difference between it and declamatory writing is as great as that between real buildings and structures [τὰ κατ' ἀλήθειαν ᾠκοδομημένα καὶ κατεσκευασμένα] and the appearances of places and compositions [διαθέσεων] in skenographia."[4] κατεσκευασμένα is sometimes translated as "furniture" and other times as "structures", which I prefer.[5] Most movable furniture could well have been "real" and just placed "on" stage. It would not need to be painted. The "structures" could then refer to things that are large and cumbersome like buildings and hence good candidates for facsimiles rather than the real thing. Next, Pollitt translates διαθέσεων as "subjects" rather than "compositions" like other translators. Neither choice is entirely satisfactory. Nor do Aristotle, Timaeus, and Polybius tell us precisely what skenographia is.

Our next citation chronologically comes from Strabo in the first century BCE who (5.3.8 [236C]) likens the Campus Martius with its monuments to a "skenographia": "And the works which are located throughout the area and the land itself … and the brows of the hills which, in rising above the river and reaching up to its channel, present to the sight a scene painting [σκηνογραφικὴν ὄψιν ἐπιδεικνύμεναι]—all these provide a view which it is difficult to ignore."[6] Strabo uses skenographia, in modern terms, as a painted backdrop with a landscape dotted with buildings.

Vitruvius at the end of the first century BCE is one of our fullest and most problematic sources. He says (1.2.2):

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that erroneous interpretation only by ignoring the later textual evidence. For an excellent discussion of the classical antecedents for this passage and Vitruvius 1.2.2 (to be discussed shortly below), see Gros 2008. Senseney (2011) provides good summaries of some of the issues associated with skenographia, but his belief that the Greeks must have used linear perspective in designing their buildings skews his discussion. Finally, for a thorough review of the texts and the issues involved, see Rouveret (1989) 65–127.

3 Some scholars think that the line is a later interpolation and not Aristotelian. Brown (1984) credits G.F. Else (in 14 n. 2) with first suggesting this idea. Against whom, see Ley 1989.

4 The Greek of the last part of this sentence is important: "ἡλίκην ἔχει τὰ κατ' ἀλήθειαν ᾠκοδομημένα καὶ κατεσκευασμένα τῶν ἐν ταῖς σκηνογραφίαις φαινομένων τόπων καὶ διαθέσεων". Polybius 12.28a 1.4–2.1. My translation.

5 LCL [W.R. Paton] and Scott-Kilvert for "furniture" and Pollitt (1974) 236 No. 2 as "structures".

6 Translation from Pollitt (1974) 236 No. 3.

> The species of design [*dispositio*] … are these: **ichnography** (plan), **orthography** (elevation), and **scenography**. **Ichnography** is the skillful use, to scale, of compass and rule, by means of which the on-site layout of the design is achieved. Next, **orthography** is a frontal image, one drawn to scale, rendered according to the layout for the future work. As for **scenography**, it is the shaded rendering [*adumbratio*] of the front and the receding sides as the latter converge on a point.[7]

The passage crucially says nothing about the theater and its stage. Vitruvius considers skenographia as divorced from the theater and an independent form of "design", *dispositio* in Latin, which the *OLD* defines as "spatial arrangement, layout, formation".[8] Skenographia is one of the three kinds of drawing that an architect must master. An architect has to be able to do a ground plan, a two-dimensional elevation presumably of the four "sides" of a rectangular building (and significant sections of a round building, such as the entrance as well as the "back"), and a skenographia. Unlike some earlier translators, Rowland has carefully avoided the use of the word "perspective".[9] She has translated *adumbratio* as "shaded rendering", a literal interpretation of the word rather than the freer "sketch, outline" also given in the *OLD*. White stresses this aspect of *adumbratio*, when he translates the passage more literally as: "scenography is the sketching of the front and of the retreating sides and the correspondence (convergence) of all the lines to the point of the compasses (centre of a circle)."[10] He too has avoided using the word "perspective", but, again, like Rowland has the sides converging on a point—an arrangement that is inextricably linked in our post-Renaissance minds as a form of linear perspective.

Vitruvius (7, praef. 11) appears later to add to his discussion of skenographia. In my literal translation:

> For, first, Agatharcus made a stage-building [*scaena*] in Athens when Aeschylus was producing a tragedy, and he [Agatharcus] left a commentary about it. Democritus and Anaxagoras, learned from it and in turn wrote about the same

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7 Translation from Rowland and Howe (1999) 24–25. Words are bolded as they are in the translation. Instead of "to scale", *modice* should be translated as "regular [use]".

8 *OLD* 555 s.v. **dispositio** [a]. The other two usages refer to rhetoric ("arrangement of arguments, words, etc.") and "living" ("the orderly arrangement or disposition of time, activities, etc."). Vayos Liapis (personal communication) suggests that διάθεσις, as the Greek equivalent of *dispositio*, could be translated similarly in the Polybius (12.28a 1.4–2.1) passage quoted above as "design". The idea has much merit, but also entails problems, because Polybios implies that διάθεσις is a part of skenographia; whereas Vitruvius reverses that relationship by making skenographia one of three elements that comprise *dispositio*.

9 For example, Morgan 1960.

10 White (1956) 51.

> subject [*res*], that is in what way lines should respond in a natural relation [*ratio naturalis*] to the point [*acies*] of the eyes and the extension of the rays [*radii*] once a fixed [*certus*] place [*locus*] has been established as the center, in order that from a fixed position [*res*] the images of buildings in the paintings of the stage-buildings [*imagines aedificiorum in scaenarum picturis*] reproduce an appearance [*species*] with some [lines] seen extending [*prominentia*] and others receding when painted on the vertical [*directus*] planes and fronts [of the stage-building/scaena].

In contrast to the previous passage where the theater goes unmentioned, here Vitruvius speaks only about the theater and optics with no mention of architectural drawings of any kind. He does not use the term "skenographia", but the more literal description of "images of buildings in the paintings of the stage-buildings". The context is important. Vitruvius began Book 7 ("Finishing") with a discussion of the treatises written before his time in part to credit his predecessors. Hence when Vitruvius who, like me, is working chronologically through the sources, comes to the fifth century BCE, he refers to Agatharcus and the fact that Agatharcus influenced the philosophers Democritus and Anaxagoras. Vitruvius is not concerned here with architectural plans for *real* buildings. Instead he wants to stress how one person influences another.

In other words, the earlier passage (1.2.2) describes the tools the contemporary architect needs. The later passage acknowledges Vitruvius' debt to his predecessors. It is not at all clear that the word "skenographia" existed in the fifth century BCE. Our earliest citation is by Aristotle in the following century. Furthermore, Agatharcus was a painter and it is his painting that drew the attention of the two philosophers. The usefulness of that kind of depiction for architects was not yet apparent. Most important of all Vitruvius uses the word "*scaenographia*" only in 1.2.2.[11] Nor does he elsewhere refer to its two companions, *ichnographia* and *orthographia*. In other words, Vitruvius considers skenographia solely as a type of technical architectural drawing, and once he has finished the discussion of such drawings, he has no need to refer to any of them later. Hence when Vitruvius (5.6.8) discusses the three different kinds of setting for the theater, he does *not* use the word "skenographia" but rather describes the decoration of the *scaena*. Similarly,

[11] Vitruvius does refer to the *scaenae frons* ["front of the stage building"] in several passages, all of which deal with the construction of the theater itself except for one (5.6.8–9) that concerns its decoration. This passage, as is to be expected, presents its own problems. It does not deal with the form of the decoration but just the choice of subject and its placement on *periaktoi*, another enigmatic element discussed briefly below.

Pliny (*Natural History* 35.37 (113)) maintains the same distinction when he mentions "Serapio [who] painted stages [*scaenae*] well, but could not paint a person."[12]

The bifurcation of the meaning of skenographia continues in the later sources. The use of "perspective" today in the context of art provides a good analogy. Art historians are very careful to define what they mean by "perspective"; whereas the general populace generally means "linear perspective" when they use "perspective" alone. Both uses coexist contemporaneously. Similarly, skenographia continues to refer to painted settings (or more literally "scene painting") in later sources.[13] Nor does its meaning remain fixed, for in the fifth century AD Hesychius (s.v.*σκιά*) considers skenographia a synonym of *skiagraphia*, loosely translated as "shading" or "shadows".[14]

At this point our discussion becomes two-pronged. First, what was skenographia in its connection to the theater; and, second, has Vitruvius described linear perspective?

Scholars divide into two major groups: those who believe in elaborate painted sets and those who espouse minimalist decoration.[15] Both face one insurmountable problem: no tangible evidence. Theaters in the fifth century BCE were temporary structures made of wood. Except for a central entrance most of the plays could make do with virtually no setting beyond that embedded in the plays themselves. For example, the *Agamemnon* opens:

> I ask the gods some respite from the weariness
> of this watchtime measured by years I lie awake
> elbowed upon the Atreidae's roof dogwise to mark
> the grand processionals of all the stars of night.[16]

We immediately know who is speaking, the watchman, and where he is, the palace of Agamemnon.

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12 My translation.

13 As "scene painting", see: Plutarch, *Life of Aratus* 15.2 = Pollitt (1974) 237 No. 5; Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 7.88 = Pollitt (1974) 237 No. 6; Heliodorus 7.7.7 = Pollitt (1974) 237 No. 7; Heliodorus 10.38.3 = Pollitt (1974) 238 No. 8; and Diogenes Laertius 2.125 = Pollitt (1974) 238 No. 9.

14 Pollitt (1974) 238 No. 10. *Skiagraphia* presents its own problems, which cannot be addressed here. Pollitt's main discussion of *skiagraphia* follows on 247–254. Summers (2007) discusses the entanglement of the two terms in his first chapter (16–42).

15 For incredible fantastical reconstructions of the sets for various plays, see Bulle and Wirsing 1950. For the minimalist view, see Pickard-Cambridge (1946) who discusses the "scenery" period by period and remains an invaluable source.

16 Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 1–4. Translation from Lattimore 1953.

Once permanent stone theaters appeared in the fourth century BCE, the problems of indicating setting actually increase. If one erects a temporary theater, it can be adapted to suit the plays being staged. If one, however, has a permanent theater, certain aspects become fixed. The most important difference between classical and contemporary theaters generally goes unremarked. Today we are accustomed to bare stages with easily changeable, movable flats, scrims, and, indeed, whole built settings of rooms, buildings, outdoor scenes, etc. The evidence from permanent Roman stone theaters indicates that the Romans, and probably the Greeks, were content with one permanent backdrop whose only requirement was three entrances with the central one being the most important. These permanent backdrops could not be easily hidden or camouflaged. Furthermore, it is not likely that a long-standing tradition of elaborate sets adapted to individual plays would be replaced by a one-scene-fits-all setting. Consider how in the twentieth century we became increasingly discerning in what we required for sets in movies, television, and, of course, stage productions. I think that classical "sets" were always rudimentary by our standards.

In the fifth century BCE the most obvious place for skenographia would be on the stage-building (*skēnē*), as implied in the word. Nonetheless, it still is not clear where the paintings would go. If the building had any entrances, then presumably the skenographia could go between and/or above them. The Hellenistic theater gets a low stage with a "formal" stage building. From the Hellenistic evidence, both inscriptions and actual remains, openings, called *thyromata*, could be filled with *pinakes*, which presumably could be changed.[17] The *pinakes* could be installed in two places: the *episkenion* with large openings above the *logeion* or stage itself and the *proskenion*, between the front edge of the stage and the "floor" of the orchestra, with smaller openings than in the *episkenion*. A cement pinax decorated with a wooden door has survived from Priene.[18] Bieber suggests that curtains, *siparia*, positioned above the *thyromata*, could be dropped to cover inappropriate pinakes and cites a Roman marble relief from Castel San Elia with separate curtains for each opening/*thyroma* neatly gathered at the top.[19]

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[17] Csapo and Slater (1994) 434 s.v. *thyroma*. Bieber (1961) 111–112 with figs. 423–425 (theater at Priene) and 120–125 with figs. 426–429 (theater at Oropus). Bieber remains remarkably useful for her broad discussion and extensive illustrations.

[18] Bieber (1961) 123 with n. 54.

[19] Bieber (1961) 180 with fig. 629, a marble relief from Castel San Elia with a theatrical scene above with *siparia* gathered between low columns. Another example of the use of a curtain to hide a portion of the *scaenae frons* is the relief with the putative periactus discussed below.

By the end of the first century BCE most Roman theaters were no longer temporary wooden structures, but had a multi-storey *scaenae frons* that is embellished throughout with columns. While this facade provides the "required" three entrances, it also provides no obvious place for skenographia, that is for decorated "flats" of whatever nature. For a specific well-preserved example, consider the Theater at Orange whose theater building has largely survived.[20]

The Romans, and probably the Greeks, seem to have gotten around the limitation with the use of *periacti* (*periaktoi*)—a three-sided device that could be rotated to display one of three possible settings (city, country, and satyr-play/cave). As the scene changed, someone would turn the device to the appropriate scene.[21] (*Figure 1*) Viewers who can live with such a simple signal of location are not terribly demanding. Unfortunately not only has no *periactus* survived, but also scholars do not agree about the placement of the *periacti*, how many there were, or even if they existed in the fifth century BCE.[22] It is assumed that skenographia would have been used to decorate the *periacti*. In other words, we have another tantalizing reference that tells us nothing about what skenographia actually was or looked like.

We now turn to the second prong: how should Vitruvius 1.2.2 be interpreted? Two relatively lengthy passages expand on Vitruvius' citation. The

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20 Sear (2006) 245–247 s.v. Arausio and especially pl. 67. Sear (2006) is the best compendium of Roman theaters with a catalogue of extant theaters, their plans, and photographs, as well as an excellent introduction to their architecture and workings.

21 Vitruvius 5.6.8.

22 Pickard-Cambridge (1946) 126 is against their use in the fifth century BCE. Morgan (1960, 147 plan = "deltas" in circles) puts three on each side, for which see *Figure 1*. Rowland and Howe ((1999) 247 fig. 83 top) have two, but within doorways. Sear (2006) 8 has one at each end and says that one has survived at the theater in Lyon (236 s.v. "Hyposcaenium"): "At south end an inclined platform for the machines (cf. Arausio [theater at Orange].)" So if this is a *periactus*, only the mechanism for its turning would seem to have survived. Schnörer (2002) 69 figs. 80–82 places three together in a large opening whose placement is not clear. Wiles ((1991), 42–44; pl. 3) suggests that a Roman relief shows a *periactus*, but his argument is not compelling: "the broken line and dizzy angles suggest that we are actually looking at a sculptor's rendering of a *trompe l'oeil* scene painting set on a *periaktos* that is not quite flush. This city scene is covered by a curtain, probably because its grandeur belongs to tragedy. Faintly behind the curtains, we can trace the line of the pediment on which the *periaktos* rests." Unfortunately too many Roman reliefs and paintings exhibit similar characteristics from the odd angles to the curtains without portraying *periacti*. While Bieber ((1961) 92–93, fig. 324) also thinks that the scene is comic, she makes no mention of a *periactus*. Marble relief, Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 575.

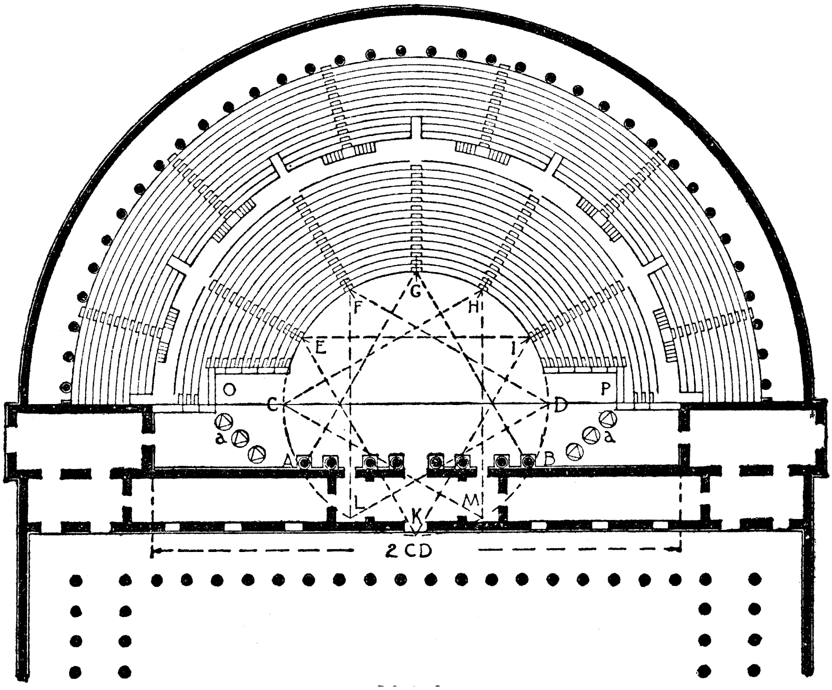

Figure 1. Plan of a Roman Theater. After Morgan (1960) 147 top.

first has been variously attributed to Geminus (1st c. BCE), Heron of Alexandria (*Definitiones* I35.13 = 1st c. CE), and "Damianus" (4th c. CE).[23] No matter who wrote it, it fits well with the first Vitruvian passage. It says:

> What is *skenographia* [or the "*skenographic* part of optics"]? The *skenographic* part of optics seeks to discover how one should paint [or "draw"] images of buildings. For since things do not give the appearance of being what they in fact are, they look to see not how they will represent the actual underlying shapes, but, rather, they render these shapes in whatever way they appear. The goal of the architect is to give his work a satisfying shape using appearance as his standard, and insofar as is possible, to discover compensations for the deceptions of the vision, aiming not at balance or shapeliness based on real measurements [or "reality"] but at these qualities as they appear to the vision.[24]

[23] Pollitt (1974) 96 n. 44 gives a good summary of the attributions and hence the possible dates.

[24] Translation from Pollitt (1974) 239–240 No. 12. Italics and comments between brackets are Pollitt's.

Three things stand out in this quotation. First, skenographia is categorized as part of the study of optics. Second, it is a method of drawing to depict buildings and presumably nothing else. Third, it is concerned more with appearances than reality—a trait it had from at least the fourth century BCE.

The second passage is more secure in its attribution and date. Proclus in the fifth century AD wrote a commentary on Euclid (Book I 40, ed. Friedein). He elaborates on the previous quotation:

> What is more, optics and the mathematical theory of music are offshoots of geometry and arithmetic; … demonstrated in the art which is called *skenographia*, [i.e. the theory of] how appearances should avoid giving the impression of being ill shaped or ill formed in pictures, based on the distances and the height of painted [or drawn] figures.[25]

Proclus, like "Geminus" just discussed, ties skenographia to optics and, significantly, to geometry. In other words, skenographia is a technical tool that simultaneously uses precise rules to make things appear "right" rather than as they "are".[26]

With this background I can now address the principal scholarly interpretation of the word skenographia as "perspective" and most likely "linear perspective". I do not believe Vitruvius or, indeed, anyone in classical antiquity had any understanding of the concept of a vanishing point much less of linear perspective. The problem is compounded, because the term "vanishing point" is modern.[27] Yet the absence of the term does not prove the absence of the concept. Instead only an analysis of texts and pictures can make a stronger or weaker case for or against the concept. To use the Renaissance and Baroque periods as examples, enough paintings and descriptive texts exist to indicate that they understood not just the idea of a vanishing point but also a number of the other concepts it entailed.[28] That is not the case for classical antiquity.

First, if Vitruvius (1.2.2) meant a vanishing point, we would know it and not have spent a century arguing about the meaning of fourteen words. The concept is sufficiently unusual to merit an explanation, yet easy enough

25 Translation from Pollitt (1974) 239 No. 11. Italics and comments between brackets are Pollitt's.

26 Compare the well-known statement attributed to Lysippus: "he used commonly to say that whereas his predecessors had made men as they really were, he made them as they appeared to be." Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 34.19 (65). Translation from LCL (translator, H. Rackham).

27 Edgerton (1975) 26.

28 For example, the "horizon line isocephaly" (Edgerton (1975) 26).

to describe if you grasp the concept. We would see it clearly expressed in Roman painting of which we have more than enough from Vitruvius' time to study. Other writers, like Lucretius, interested in such phenomena would have written about it. Reliefs, again plentiful, would also incorporate its principles. That simply does not happen. In fact, the case is overwhelming for no knowledge of linear perspective.[29]

Second, the use of compasses with central points and rulers are two of the basic tools for the architect. Vitruvius (1.1.4) says: "**Geometry** [*sic*] in turn, offers many aids to architecture, and first among them, it hands down the technique of compass and rule, which enables the on-site layout of the plan as well as the placement of set-squares, levels, and lines."[30] Consider for example his instructions (5.6.1) for designing a theater: "Whatever the size of the lower perimeter, locate a center point and draw a circle around it, and in this circle draw four triangles with equal sides and at equal intervals. These should just touch the circumference of the circle."[31] His famous description of the human body also depends on the idea of a center point (3.1.3):

> [T]he center and midpoint of the human body is, naturally, the navel. For if a person is imagined lying back with outstretched arms and feet within a circle whose center is at the navel, the fingers and toes will trace the circumference of this circle as they move about. But to whatever extent a circular scheme may be present in the body, a square design may also be discerned there.[32]

In other words, as long as you are using compasses, you will have a center point. You may also have rectilinear forms within that circle like the triangles for the theater and the square for the body. Thus, if Vitruvius intended the center point to mean anything beyond its usual purpose when using compasses, he would have had to say so.

Third, the utility of linear perspective was not apparent to classical artists. Linear perspective is notoriously inefficient at capturing information other than physical setting.[33] For example, a sacrificial scene on the column of Trajan combines aspects of linear perspective with hierarchical and bird's eye perspective.[34] We see the animals being led to slaughter outside the

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29 From an art historian's point of view, so also Richter (1974) 3. From more of a scientific stance, see Knorr 1991 and Andersen (2007) 723–730.

30 Translation from Rowland and Howe 1999.

31 Translation from Rowland and Howe 1999.

32 Translation from Rowland and Howe 1999.

33 See Small 2009.

34 Scene 53 (132–134). Small (2009) 152 fig. 9–3.

precinct and then within the precinct, which would not be visible in linear perspective; and we see Trajan, depicted larger than the other humans, about to perform the ritual.

Fourth, the appearance of a tapering colonnade in Roman wall paintings and in literary descriptions of colonnades does not inevitably imply an understanding of how linear perspective works. The most quoted example comes from Lucretius (4.426–431):

> When we gaze from one end down the whole length of a colonnade, though its structure is perfectly symmetrical and it is propped throughout on pillars of equal height, yet it contracts by slow degrees in a narrowing cone that draws roof to floor and left to right till it unites them in the imperceptible apex of the cone [*donec in obscurum coni conduxit acumen*].[35]

Colonnades abounded in classical architecture. Photographs today, for example, of the reconstructed Stoa of Attalos II in the Agora in Athens portray the precise effect described by Lucretius.[36] The Latin of the last line of Lucretius is important, because it indicates less the idea of a vanishing point and more that of the object not being viewable in the distance. Furthermore, Euclid (*Optics*, Definition 2, which I quote in full) uses similar wording in an unambiguous context that precludes the idea of a vanishing point: "and that the figure included within our vision-rays is a cone, with its apex [κορυφή] in the eye and its base at the limits of our vision."[37] Next, no classical depiction of colonnades shows them like the modern railroad tracks with a vanishing point. Instead the colonnades taper from the sides to the center, but never meet. A horizontal cross-section joins them to each other in a manner that reflects the common construction of peristyles, as the Second Style cubiculum from Boscoreale, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, demonstrates.[38] The "visual cone" is a theoretical idea that classical theories of vision used to describe how rays emanate from (a) one's own eyes, (b) from the objects themselves, or (c) mix in between.[39]

Fifth, the pseudo-perspectival scheme applies only to the architectural framework of the decoration of a room, as also seen in the cubiculum from

35 Translation from Latham (1951) 143.

36 http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stoa_of_Attalos_Athens_Agora.JPG.

37 Translation from Irby-Massie and Keyser (2002) 181.

38 Bergmann et al. (2010) 31 figs. 55–56. The end panels (on the right for fig. 55 and on the left for fig. 56) show typical painted colonnades.

39 This idea has been linked with Democritus and Anaxagoras, as quoted earlier in the passage from Vitruvius (7, praef.11). Ings (2007) 154–161 provides one of the clearest descriptions of classical optics and vision.

Boscoreale.[40] A.M.G. Little investigated its use of vanishing points.[41] (*Figure 2*) The two long walls are more or less identical in their arrangement into four parts, though the parts farthest from the doorway seem to be separated from the rest of the side walls by a painted pilaster that extends from the floor to the ceiling. If the sections beyond the pilasters are not considered, a typical vertical, tripartite division of the wall appears. In this case, rather than implying a specific, single architectural structure, each "panel" allows the viewer to view either a cityscape (the two end panels) or the interior of a sanctuary in the middle panels. Little's reconstruction of the vanishing points shows a number of misalignments from the vertical axis, as well as multiple points along that axis.[42]

Under normal circumstances we do not notice the discrepancies. Only a scholar would draw lines to check for a single vanishing point or multiple points along a vertical axis. The important question is why we do not notice the absence of linear perspective despite the fact that most of us today have been trained from photographs and art to assume that linear perspective is the right way to depict architecture. The answer actually is simple. We can either physically "see" an entire scene, but not in fine enough detail to notice discrepancies; or we can look at the details, but not the overall view and the details simultaneously.[43] In this case, the wall, even when just viewing the three panels, is too wide and the distance we can stand back from it too short to take all three panels in one glance. As soon as we need more than one "look", we are unable without mechanical assistance, such as photographs and a straight edge, to figure out precisely where the vanishing points are. In other words, when we look at the cityscapes, it meets our *general* requirement of linear perspective, because the buildings are depicted in a three-dimensional fashion with oblique views that show the sides and occasionally the tops or bottoms. Even if we focus on specific buildings, we find that none is fully enough depicted to reconstruct accurately. It is the idea of a cityscape, not an actual one, that matters.

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40 While details of the walls are readily available, "complete" views of the side walls are more difficult to find. See: Bergmann et al. (2010) 31 figs. 55–56. Also see the bibliography on 47–48. Lehmann 1953 remains very useful. For color photographs with details: http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/03.14.13a-g.

41 Little (1971) pl. III fig. 2.

42 Panofsky (1991) 39 calls the scheme a "fishbone or, more formally put, vanishing-axis principle".

43 So also Lehmann (1953) 150, but without the technical explanation. For a description of how the fovea (central focusing part of the eye works) compared to the overall view of a scene, see among many others: Macknik et al. (2010) 29–30. They (ibid., 46) offer an analysis similar

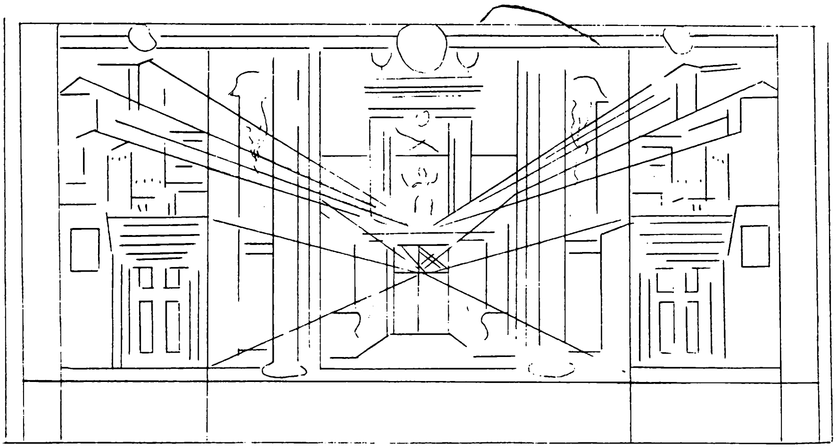

Figure 2. Cubiculum from Boscoreale. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. After Little (1971) pl. III fig. 2.

Just as importantly the classical texts support the focus on individual objects. While individual objects may obey the rules of linear perspective, the entire scene with all its parts depicted from one viewpoint is the hallmark of linear perspective. When each element is treated separately, the viewer has to change his position or viewing point to see that element from its "optimal" view. It is crucial to note that neither Euclid nor Ptolemy, the two major authors whose works on optics have (more or less) survived, considered how people look at whole scenes. They and all the other texts we have, instead, discuss how we view individual objects. Ings puts it clearly: "[T]he eye's ray is narrow, taking in one object at a time. It [extramission] explains why we clearly see just a tiny part of the visual scene, while the rest is a blur; only that part of the visual ray reflected directly back into the eye is strong enough to be perceived properly."[44] Brownson states: "Euclid's *Optics* studies the apparent size, shape, and position of objects from a point of observation, while the central problem for linear perspective is determining the relative size, shape, and placement of objects in a scene as they appear at a picture plane."[45]

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to mine for how Escher's *Ascending and Descending* (1960) works: "He (Macknik) found that he couldn't look at the structure globally. He could only really see one area of the staircase at a time .... since you can see only one local area at any given time, small, gradual errors along the entire structure could not be seen with the naked eye."

44 Ings (2007) 160.

45 Brownson (1981) 165. The idea of the picture-plane is post-Antique.

Figure 3. South Italian Volute-Krater by the Varrese Painter. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 03.804. Francis Bartlett Donation of 1900. Photograph ©–2011 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

The focus on individual objects and not their place in the whole scene becomes especially apparent in South Italian vase-painting from the fourth century BCE. The emphasis is on "apparent", because it is not so much the way objects were represented that changed, but that the change in their surrounding settings made visible the way objects were viewed. In the fifth century BCE single scenes on vases begin to be portrayed on multiple levels. For instance, the dead and dying Niobids on the Niobid krater are dispersed about a rolling countryside.[46] At this point nothing jars our visual sense. How to render three-dimensional elements, like humans, occurs slowly and is mastered element by element and sometimes part by part. For example, by the end of the sixth/beginning of the fifth century BCE shields show both the exterior and interior.[47]

In South Italian vase painting the number of levels increase and the use of rectilinear objects seen from oblique views makes clear that no overall coordination exists for any given scene. Consider the volute-krater by the Varrese Painter, ca. 340 BCE, in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.[48] (*Figure 3*) Side A depicts the death of Thersites whose headless body lies on its own ground-line directly beneath the aedicula with Achilles, his murderer, and Phoenix. The aedicula is depicted in a three-quarter view that one looks up at, since the rafters are visible. The couch on which Achilles sits is shown in a similar three-quarter view, although its underside is not visible. Achilles and Phoenix, however, are depicted orthogonally, virtually head-on. We can remove them from the aedicula and place them in any scene with a single ground line and they will seem appropriate. The same is true for the figures dispersed around the aedicula, each of whom has his own wavy ground line despite appearing to float in the middle of the space. None of the figures has had his proportions adjusted to fit where he appears. Everyone is pretty

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46 Paris, Louvre G 341, from Orvieto. *ARV*^{2} 601 No. 22. *BAD* No. 206954 (with photographs and bibliography). Small (2003) 18 fig. 8.

47 Among many examples, in the scene of Theseus killing the centaur by the Foundry Painter, Theseus' shield is elliptical and shows both exterior and interior, with a hint at its roundness by the use of hatching. Interior of a kylix; ca. 490/480 BCE; Munich 2640; *ARV*^{2} 402 No. 22; *BAD* No. 204363 (with photographs and bibliography).

48 Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 1900.03.804. Padgett et al. (1993) 99–106 with numerous photographs. See also http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/mixing-bowl-volute-krater-154078. I am purposely not using the "standard" example of the Apulian calyx-krater fragment now in Würzburg (Martin von Wagner Museum Inv. H 4696/4701), because it has been widely discussed and actually confuses the issue with its depiction of a "real" theater that shows only decoration for the pediment rather than decoration on some theater's wall; nor does it indicate how the South Italian artist viewed a whole scene. See Christensen 1999. For a

much to the same scale. Of the objects scattered in the field around Thersites that indicate the struggle between him and Achilles, two matter. On the far left at the bottom a basin has fallen off its support, yet the water seen in its interior defies gravity and looks level. The footed basin, on the right just beyond Thersites' head, looks empty, but like its counterpart is depicted at an angle.

The problem is that if we are looking up at the rafters in the aedicula, how can we simultaneously be looking down at the inside of the two basins? A scene in linear perspective could not allow such an occurrence, but if each object is viewed separately—the way we normally zoom in on details—then the artist can choose the view that suits him (and the scene) best. In this case, the artist's "canonical" view is looking down at a basin to see its farther rim and contents. "Canonical" is a term commonly used in cognitive science to refer to the view from which an object, building, etc. is most easily identified and hence captures what is most typical about that object.[49] Canonical views tend to become formulaic so that whenever a footed basin, for example, is required, the canonical view is used. Because we cannot physically in any case take in the details of the two vases *and* the aedicula simultaneously, it actually does not matter for the artist or, indeed, even the viewer that one overall schema was not used for the vase painting.[50] Finally, indirect corroboration comes from the scenes in the main panels in Roman wall-painting. While buildings may be depicted in a three-quarter view similar to the aedicula on the vase with Thersites, it is never applied uniformly throughout the scene to either the figures or the structures within the panels.

Thus far I have avoided grappling with precisely what Vitruvius (1.2.2) may mean when he said in White's more literal translation: "scenography is the sketching of the front and of the retreating sides and the correspondence (convergence) of all the lines to the point of the compasses (centre of a circle)." Pollitt is more explicit: "And finally *scaenographia* is the semblance of a front and of sides receding into the background and the correspondence of all the lines [in this representation] to [a vanishing point at] the center

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color photograph: Schörner (2002) 67 fig. 77. Similarly, the "Room of the Masks" in the House of Augustus is often used as an example of what a Roman theater would look like, but it, too, is strikingly free of "skenographia" except, of course, for its own rendering. In other words, it does not tell us where the skenographia went, but rather how it was used. See Iacopi (2008) 20 bottom.

[49] For definitions and a history of the idea, see Blanz et al. 1996.

[50] Perry (1937) presents an argument about "Greek life and literature" that parallels mine here.

of a circle."[51] The additions in parentheses and brackets for both White and Pollitt are their own. The real question is, then, did Vitruvius in this passage mean, imply, or even know the concept of a vanishing point. Clearly Pollitt believes he did, while White is more circumspect. I would, instead, more literally translate the crucial fourteen words: "*item scaenographia est frontis et laterum abscedentium adumbratio ad circinique centrum omnium linearum responsus*" as "Likewise skenographia is the drawing of the front and of the sides receding and the response of all lines to the center of the compass."

Perhaps the best representation of the concept—not necessarily the placement—is presented by Kenner.[52] She places a man with his eye level at the center of a large circle. The man looks to the right at a series of squares drawn within circles with his gaze forming the visual cone. I have reduced the basic concept to the central area in *Figure 4*. I made the drawing in the following steps, roughly following Vitruvius (1.2.2):

1. Draw a circle.
2. Then a square within that circle with its four corners touching the edge of the circle.
3. This is the crucial step: diagonally extend the four corners of the square symmetrically on either side, either upward or downward to the edge of the circle.[53]

If one then combines this drawing with the concept drawn in Kenner's illustration, a visual cone results that could have inspired Democritus and Anaxagoras (Vitruvius 7, praef.11) in their understanding of how vision works. Merely by using circles and squares or rectangles an artist can produce a reasonable facsimile of a building or object, like an altar, seen in an oblique view. The important point to note is that this kind of "perspective" applies only to the objects and not the human (or animal) figures.

In summary over the course of several centuries the word "skenographia" became generalized from its origins in the theater as a means of representing a three-dimensional structure on a two-dimensional space and used more widely as a term for a technical drawing of a building seen from an oblique view as in Vitruvius (1.2.2) and "Geminus". In short, we must abandon the idea

51 Pollitt (1974) 237 No. 4.
52 Kenner (1954) 158 fig. 29.
53 Note that it is arbitrary where the vertical line is dropped. Today we tend to make the side wider than customary on South Italian vases.

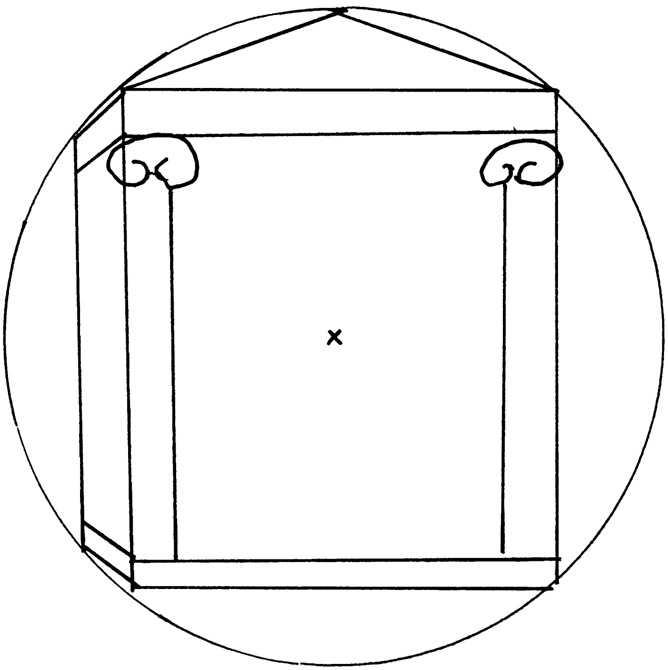

Figure 4. Author's reconstruction of drawing a building according to Vitruvius 1.2.2.

of any kind of elaborate painted stage "setting" in Greek or Roman theater. Nor is the idea of linear perspective at the base of skenographia. Skenographia is simply a technique to render buildings (and objects) in oblique views.

GREEK TRAGEDY

AESCHYLEAN *OPSIS*

A.J. Podlecki

> The visual element in Greek theatre is demonstrably strong from the time of the earliest formal drama ...[1]

Our ancient sources make clear that Aeschylus had won for himself a reputation for his stunning visual effects. The ancient *Life* in some MSS several times touches on this topic: "... he far surpassed his predecessors in the arrangement of the *skênê*, the brilliance of the production, the outfits of the actors ...;" (T 1 Radt sect. 2); "he used the visual elements and the plots to make a vivid and striking impression rather than to deceive" (sect. 7); "... he embellished the *skênê* and made a striking visual impression on the viewers through brilliance, graphic designs, use of the *mēkhanē*, altars and tombs, trumpets, apparitions, Erinyes ...." (sect. 14[2]). The entry under his name in the Suda-lexicon (not always a credible source) reports that he was "the first to use frightening masks daubed with colours" (T 2, line 5). Can this reputation be corroborated in what actually survives?

Supernumeraries

One obvious way for a dramatist (or an opera- or movie-director) to enhance the effect on an audience is with supernumeraries or "extras." As Easterling comments, "powerful visual effects could be achieved by bringing groups on stage" ((1996) 1540). Taplin remarks wryly, "there were silent extras all over the place in Greek tragedy" ((1977b) 129) and provides a useful inventory of such scenes in the extant plays.[3] For the possibility that the dramatist brought in significant numbers of performers who were *not* extras, but intrinsic and

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[1] Green (1996) 1493.

[2] This section is omitted in two important MSS, Parisinus gr. 2787 and 2789.

[3] Taplin (1977b) 79–80. It will be obvious how deeply indebted I am to this ground-breaking investigation into a previously neglected topic.

necessary to the action, I adduce *Suppliants* (and indeed its non-extant companion pieces *Aegyptians* and *Danaids*), where a chorus comprising fifty performers would not have been out of place. According to Easterling (1996) 1539, "Scholars also used to argue (from the fact that there are 50 Danaids in Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, taken together with Pollux 4.110)[4] that the number of chorus members in early tragedy was 50 …. But this view has fallen out of favour, not least because of a papyrus (*P.Oxy*. 2256 fr. 3) showing the relatively late dating of Aesch. *Supp*." But this reasoning looks suspiciously circular; just because *Supplices* may be (relatively) late,[5] that doesn't mean the chorus could not have numbered fifty. The fact of the matter is, we simply do not know how many *choreutai* were the norm in the early plays. Dithyrambic choruses at the Athenian festivals comprised fifty men or boys, and Pickard-Cambridge found "no reason to doubt … that the performances at the Great Dionysia took place in the theatre" ((1968) 32). If that is correct, the space could have accommodated a *dramatic* chorus of fifty. We should at least entertain the possibility that Aeschylus asked his *khorêgos* to provide (perhaps exceptionally) a choral troupe of fifty performers to match the expectations of his audience, who knew that the story they were about to watch involved tragic events in the lives of fifty daughters of Danaus and fifty sons of Aegyptus.

Masks and Costumes

If we can trust our sources Aeschylus also made significant advances in the matter of masks and costumes: "the outfits [σκευήν] of the actors" (*Life* [T 1] sect. 2, quoted above); "he invented the attractiveness and dignity of attire that Hierophants and Torchbearers have adopted as their costume" (Athenaeus 1. 21 D [T 103], possibly from Chamaeleon, whom he names later in the passage);[6] "he developed masks resembling the appearance of heroes

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4 T 66. The source seems suspect, especially insofar as Pollux says that the number of fifty *choreutai* continued "until the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus, when the public took fright in view of their size, and the law reduced the number of the chorus" (Csapo and Slater (1994) 394).

5 The operative word is "relatively." It is widely held that *P.Oxy*. 2256 fr. 3 points to a date for *Suppl.* in the archonship of Arkhedemides, 464/3 (see Garvie (2006) ch. 1), but this view was vigorously challenged by Scullion (2002) 90–100 (a reference I owe to an anonymous Reader), who argued for a date in the 470s. Some of Scullion's arguments are met by Garvie (2006) x–xiv. For my purposes here the dating is inconsequential; the play is full of *opsis*, whenever it was first presented.

6 Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 197 took the view that Athenaeus is to be understood as

… and first adorned [his actors] with costumes that conveyed the visual impression of heroes and heroines", Philostratus *Vit. Apoll.* 6.11 [T 106].[7] The costumes would be especially important in a play like *Persians*, a point to which I return below.

Silences

"Aeschylus was addicted to the presentation of silent actors" (Lucas (1968) 231). This peculiarity caught the attention of ancient critics starting with Aristophanes, who has his Euripides in *Frogs* complain that Aeschylus would "always start by having some solitary character sit there muffled up, say Achilles or Niobe, not letting us see their face (a poor excuse for tragic drama!) or hear even *this* much of a peep" (911–913, Henderson tr.). A few lines later "Euripides" says sourly, "He wanted the spectator to sit there waiting for the moment when his Niobe would make a sound; meanwhile the play went on and on" (919–920). The point was picked up in the ancient *Life* (T 1) sect. 6, where, besides the *Niobe* reference, the author adds that in the *Ransoming of Hector* (to which I shall return), apart from a few exchanges with Hermes at the beginning, Achilles sat silent through much of the play. Another dramatic anomaly that attracted Aristotle's attention was a lengthy silence by Telephus, who had killed his uncle in Tegea and had made the long journey to Mysia without speaking. Aristotle names the play, Μυσοί,[8] but not the author. By a line of reasoning that to me seems somewhat circular many critics think he must have been referring to Aeschylus's version of the story.

Taplin dealt with this topic thoroughly in an early paper (1972), and all I want to do here is try to gauge the audience's reaction (and they must have reacted, to judge from Aristophanes's comments) to the sight of these gloomy, silent figures, sitting on stage for interminable periods, withdrawn and aloof, impervious to the attempts of the other characters to break through to them.

citing Chamaeleon only for the innovations in choreography, not costume, but this seems to me over-subtle. The point is of no particular importance for present purposes.

7 Tr. by Csapo and Slater (1994) 261. Aristophanes's "Aeschylus" justifies his use of high-flown language: "it suits the demigods to use exalted expressions, just as they wear much more impressive clothing than we do" (*Frogs* 1060–1061, Henderson tr.).

8 *Poetics* 1460 a 32. It was this passage that elicited Lucas's comment about Aeschylus's "addiction" to depicting silent actors (see above).

Choreography

Aristophanes's perceptive eye detected another characteristic of Aeschylean dramaturgy that had a visual dimension. Citing Chamaeleon as his authority (fr. 41 Wehrli), Athenaeus reports that Aeschylus "created many of his own choral dances and presented them to the dancers … He was the first to arrange dances for his choruses without employing a choreographer, all by himself both creating moves for his choruses and taking the entire responsibility for the whole structure of the tragedy".[9] He then quotes two passages from Aristophanes (fr. 696 K-A) in which Aeschylus himself asserts "for my choruses I myself created the dances" and his interlocutor replies, "That I know by watching your *Phrygians*: when they came to help Priam ransom his dead son, they did lots of *this* and they did lots of *this* while they danced".[10] We cannot substantiate (or refute) any of these claims for Aeschylus as an innovator in the variety and elaborateness of the dances he had his chorus members perform, but I simply want to underline that the choreography of a dramatic production straddles two of Aristotle's six μέρη of tragedy, for it is as much (perhaps more) ὄψις as μελοποιΐα.

Monsters?

At *Poetics* 1456a2 Aristotle lists four "species" (εἴδη) of tragic plot: "complex" (πεπλεγμένη), "concerned with suffering" (παθητική), "concerned with character" (ἠθική). For the fourth the MSS give οης or ὀης, which is generally agreed to be corrupt. As examples of plays that fit this fourth category Aristotle names "*Phorkides*, *Prometheus* and plays that take place in Hades", and the first two titles seem to indicate that Aristotle had Aeschylus in mind. Many scholars give up on trying to solve the textual problem.[11] Others posit a latent reference to a class of dramas that relied on striking or frightening visual effects: thus ὄψ (Victorius), ὄψις (Bywater), τερατῶδες (Schrader).[12] This last designation warrants closer examination. At *Poetics* 1453b7 Aristotle castigates tragedians who use *opsis* to produce not what is truly φοβερόν but merely τὸ τερατῶδες (glossed by Lucas here as "the portentous").

[9] Athen 1. 21 E (T 103); I cite this from Henderson (2007) 445.

[10] πολλὰ τοιαυτὶ καὶ τοιαυτὶ καὶ δεῦρο σχηματίσαντας, Henderson tr. (preceding note).

[11] Thus Sommerstein: "textual corruption has left it uncertain how he defined this category" ((2008b) 261).

[12] See Lucas (1968) 187–188.

Compare the remark in section 7 of the *Life*, cited at the beginning of this essay: [Αἰσχύλος] ταῖς τε {γὰρ} ὄψεσι καὶ τοῖς μύθοις πρὸς ἔκπληξιν τερατώδη μᾶλλον ἢ πρὸς ἀπάτην κέχρηται. Radt ad loc. cites the exchange in *Frogs* where Euripides remarks that his rival ἑκάστοτε ἐν ταῖς τραγῳδίαισιν ἐτερατεύετο (833–834). In the *Prometheus Bound* (assuming for the moment that Aristotle thought it was by Aeschylus) Prometheus warns Io of the dangers that lie in wait for her as she completes her journey to the Nile Delta. She will arrive at "Kisthene, territory of Gorgons, where the three daughters of Phorkys dwell, three ancient maidens, shaped like swans, with a common eye and one tooth; these women are never in sight of the sun's rays, nor of the moon at night. And near them are their three winged sisters, the human-loathing Gorgons with snaky locks, whom no mortal can gaze on and still have life" (793–800). What actually survives of *Phorkides* is an incomplete line cited by Athenaeus as coming from that play: "he plunged into the cave like a wild boar".[13] Athenaeus took this as referring to Perseus, and if that is correct, the likelihood is strong that it formed part of a tetralogy that dealt with the story of Perseus and Andromeda.[14] Not much else can be asserted with confidence about the play beyond the fact that Perseus decoyed the Phorkides and stole their common eye, thus interfering with their role as protectors of the Gorgons. Séchan thought that it ended with Perseus's slaying of the gorgon Medusa ((1967) 108) and he looked at the iconographic evidence for hints about how the play might have developed. As "plays in Hades" Lucas (1968) 188 suggested *Psykhagôgoi* and *Sisyphus Stone-roller* (πετροκυλιστής), of which only a few lines survive. It appears to have been a satyr-play and, from the title, must have involved Sisyphus's punishment in the Underworld. The leading character of *Glaukos Pontios* drew Plato's notice. This Glaukos (a *Glaukos of Potniai*, as we shall see, was part of the *Persians* group) was almost unrecognizable "because some of the old parts of his body had been broken off, others had been crushed, and his whole body marred by the waves, while other accretions—shells and seaweed, and stones—had grown upon him so that he was more like a wild animal than he was like himself" (*Rep.* 611 c–d, Grube tr.). It is a pity that we don't know in what contexts the "Dog-heads" (Κυνοκέφαλοι fr. 431) and "Eyes-in-chests" (Στερνόφθαλμοι fr. 441) were mentioned, or possibly appeared.[15]

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[13] Fr. 261, Sommerstein tr.

[14] In that case it will not have been a satyr play as I suggested in my commentary on *Prometheus Bound* 794 ((2005) 186), for that position is pre-empted by Δικτυουλκοί.

[15] Wilamowitz suggested the Perseus story for the latter (*apud* Radt (1985) ad loc.).

There were εἴδωλα, ghosts, in *Ghost-raisers*, Ψυχαγωγοί, which was probably the first play in a tetralogy based on the *Odyssey*. These were devotees of Hermes who lived beside a “frightening” lake with a connection to the Underworld. In the longest fragment (273 a, *P. Köln* 125) the Chorus give Odysseus specific instructions how to conjure ghosts from the Underworld, and the appearance of at least one is certain, for in fr. 275 Teiresias prophesies Odysseus’s death “from the sea” when a heron will drop a sting-ray encased in guano on his aged, hairless scalp.[16]

Opsis *in the Extant Works*

Persians

Attire is important in this play (a feature that has not been unnoticed by critics).[17] The emphasis throughout the opening section is on the opulence of the society which has launched this apparently invincible expedition.[18] The enormous panoplied, gold-caparisoned army was intended to make a strong visual impression on their Greek adversaries: φοβερὰν ὄψιν προσιδέσθαι (48). It would be surprising if this had not been matched by resplendent costumes for the chorus. As Thalmann notes, they “must have been dressed as befitted Oriental nobles of high rank …. Their dress must have been splendid” ((1980) 267). “The music, dance, and costumes must have made a performance of the *Persians* very impressive” (ibid. 267 n. 23). For her part, the Queen—let us call her Atossa—arrived in an elaborate chariot and with appropriately corresponding magnificence of apparel; an audience would see this, but readers learn of it only retrospectively.[19]

How the conjuration scene (vv. 623–680) and the climactic appearance of Darius were managed in the original production we can only speculate, but it must have been spectacular in every sense of the term. Famously (and perhaps shockingly to the audience) when the young successor appears he is disheveled and in rags (907), just as his father’s ghost had foretold (833–836)—a humiliating sight, totally demeaning for an Oriental monarch and repellent to his subjects, who wanted their ruler to look like a “man equal

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[16] There is a good discussion of the play by Bardel (2005) 85–92.

[17] The topic is treated extensively by Thalmann 1980.

[18] “Gold”, “golden” vv. 3–4, 8, 45, 53, 80, 159; “wealth” 168, 250. See Garvie (2009) *General Index* under “wealth and prosperity”.

[19] At 607–608 the Queen refers, somewhat apologetically, to her unadorned apparance: ἄνευ τ’ ὀχημάτων χλιδῆς τε τῆς πάροιθεν.

to a god" (ἰσόθεος φῶς, 80).[20] We remember, however, that there had been anticipatory hints: in Atossa's dream, her son, who has fallen from his chariot and is lying on the ground, rends his robes when he sees his father (198–199), and "in real life" so to speak, when, confronted with the enormity of the disaster at Psyttaleia (κακῶν ὁρῶν βάθος, 465), Xerxes tears his robes, an event which he harks back to in the closing *thrênos* (1030).

In a study of the Greek chorus that has suffered undue neglect, T.B.L. Webster attempted to correlate the lyric metres with his idea of how the choreographed dance-steps would have appeared to the viewers. Thus, in the lyric lament by Chorus and Messenger after the latter has reported his terrible news, "everything [from vv. 268 to 289] is in dancing tempo, if not excited dancing tempo" ((1970) 114). The end of the play Webster characterizes as a "final, wild, extended lamentation" (ibid., 116). Of the other plays in the group, *Phineus*, which preceded *Persians*, told of the blind Thracian prophet whose food the Harpies snatched just as he was putting it in his mouth (fr. 258), a torture mentioned in passing at *Eumenides* 50–51.[21] In the third play, *Glaukos of Potniai*, the lead character was torn apart by his own horses. Fr. 372, unattributed, possibly derives from a description of the scene: "Foam from their human food flowed over their jaws".[22] To the closing play in the sequence, which was apparently a satyric *Prometheus*, I shall return below.

Seven against Thebes

The play opens with Eteocles's address to his people, Κάδμου πολῖται, but it is unclear whether a group of silent Thebans entered with him or whether this was a case of an address "to an imagined audience, the world in general as it were".[23] The prevailing rhythm of the opening chorus is dochmiac, "excited dancing", a "mood of excited fear", in Webster's terms ((1970) 120), and dochmiacs recur pervasively thereafter until Eteocles goes off to fight his brother after v. 719. Statues of gods (θεοὶ πολιάοχοι χθονός, 109) were

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[20] Noteworthy is Aristotle's remark about the arousal of pity by "the garments and the like of those who have already suffered" (*Rhet.* 1386b2 Roberts tr.; Halliwell (1998) 338 n. 6). In *Frogs* "Aeschylus" flings the charge at Euripides, "You made your royals wear rags, so that they'd strike people as being piteous [ἐλεινοί]" (1063–1064, Henderson tr.).

[21] Possibly inspired by the play are scenes on a Lucanian volute-krater of the late-fifth century (Trendall and Webster (1971) III.1,26; Kossatz-Deissmann (1978) 121–123, with Tafel 25,2).

[22] Sommerstein tr. He suggests *Aktaion* as an alternative attribution (the jaws in that case being canine, not equine).

[23] The phrase is Davies's ((1991) 242; I owe this ref. to Prof. V. Liapis), who gives further references. Taplin discusses the issue at length ((1977b) 129–134).

certainly visible, perhaps positioned symmetrically around the perimeter of the orchestra.[24] In the central scene Eteocles names six defenders (besides himself) to fend off the attacking "Seven". Were they actually present? This is a question to which, I believe, no definite answer can be given.[25]

About the two preceding plays, *Laius* and *Oedipus*, nothing much is known beyond the general outlines of the story. Did the self-blinded Oedipus actually appear, as in Sophocles? We simply don't know.

Suppliant Women

The fifty daughters of Danaus enter a grove on the outskirts of Argos with their father, fleeing from their cousins, the fifty sons of Aegyptus (the number is specified at v. 321). They are fearful and in some distress, as they demonstrate by some vehement gestures like tearing their veils (vv. 120–121; cf. *Libation Bearers* 425–428). They are dark-skinned (154–155), and when Pelasgus arrives the first thing that strikes him is how exotic they look with their "unhellenic attire," their luxurious "barbarian robes and headpieces" (234–236).[26] Pelasgus greets their claims to kinship with the Argive people with incredulity: "You resemble more closely Libyan women", he tells them (279–280), or nomadic Indian women, or flesh-eating Amazons (284–287). They share their unusual appearance with their father, who later asks Pelasgus for an escort to get him through the city safely precisely on the grounds that because he looks different he may be at some risk from the locals (495–498). Their Aegyptiad cousins, too, have a striking appearance: Danaus from his vantage-point later says he can see them aboard the pursuing ship, "their black limbs standing forth from their white clothing" (719, Friis Johansen tr.). They are threatening to attack "with a large black army" (745). Somewhere in the orchestra, perhaps around its periphery as in *Septem*, were representation of gods of the Greek

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[24] Mentioned explicitly or by title are Athena (130, Ὄγκα 164), Ares (135), Aphrodite (140), Apollo (145, 159), Hera (152), and Artemis (154). As Thalmann remarks ((1978) 82), "The repetitions of σύ (lines 127, 135, 145, 149) suggest that [the chorus] actually gesture or move toward each of the statues in turn." There is a good discussion of the importance of these statues as "significant stage properties ....constant presences throughout, casting a watchful eye over the action" by Torrance (2007) 39.

[25] Taplin lists some proponents of the "visible defender" side ((1977b) 150 n. 1). He himself demurs on the (to me, rather flimsy) grounds that "there is insufficient sign of their presence in the text" (ibid.; so too Hutchinson (1985) 105, 111 "the unattractive theory"). The case for visible defenders onstage is made by Poochigian (2007–2008), who meets head-on the problem of the mixture of tenses (future tenses at Gates 1, 5 and 6, past tenses at Gates 2, 3 and 4).

[26] Their strange headgear comes in for a mention again later, 431–432. Paley aptly comments "doubtless ... there was much of colour and splendour, if only for stage effect" ((1879) 27).

pantheon: probably Zeus, certainly Apollo, Poseidon and Hermes.[27] At these various images the girls lay their suppliant wreaths, which will later draw the King's attention (346, 354). And it is from these statues that the girls later threaten to hang themselves if the King fails to accept their plea for asylum (455–466). The tenuous situation in which these young women find themselves is reflected in the metre (and presumably also the choreography) of the central lyric section between the Danaids and Pelasgus.[28]

The last part of *Suppliants* is full of action (and, for the girls, possibly suffering too, if their would-be captors succeed in their efforts to drag them away from their place of refuge). Danaus's report that the Aegyptiad ship is nearing harbour (above) produces panic in the girls, and father and daughter engage in what Webster (1970) 123 terms "an excited lyric dialogue" (vv. 736–759), mostly in dochmiacs. Because of the ruinous state of the MSS there is some uncertainty about what exactly ensued. The pursuers whose arrival the Danaids had been dreading, together with their κῆρυξ (just as Pelasgus had anticipated, v. 727), rush in and try to drag the girls to the ship; these latter naturally resist. There follows a general scene of disorder, much of it in lyric metres.[29] Pelasgus, attended, returns to denounce this behaviour as outrageous, barbaric (κάρβανος 914). The intruders go off in a huff and the King tells the girls, "together with their dear attendants" (954; we have not heard of these previously but they must have been there right from the beginning for the audience to see[30]) to go into the city and look for lodgings with citizens of whose hospitality and good will he says he is confident. Danaus, who by this time has returned with a bodyguard of spearmen assigned to him by the King (985–986), is not so sure for, as he tells them, "in the case of a settler (μέτοικος) everybody has a tongue well-fitted for working ills" (994, Friis Johansen tr.). The repeated undercurrents of uncertainty about the status of the women in their new home and about the firmness of the resolve of their newly rediscovered kinsmen may point to developments later in the trilogy, but the specifics elude us.

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27 That something was there for the audience to see is guaranteed by deictics in the text: Ζηνὸς ὄρνιν τόνδε (212), τῶνδε δαιμόνων (217), τρίαιναν τήνδε (218 and cf. 755 τριαίνας τάσδε), Ἑρμῆς ὅδ' ἄλλος (220). Ley suggests they were "freestanding images or, possibly, just high-relief sculpture such as might be found on a frieze" ((2007b) 19).

28 Lines 348–437. Webster comments, "Here the women are almost as agitated as the chorus in the *Septem*" ((1970) 122). The metre is largely dochmiac with, from vv. 418 to the end, a large admixture of cretics ("an agitated metre", Webster ibid., 123).

29 Webster says it is "too corrupt to expound [sc. metrically]" ((1970) 124).

30 Friis Johansen and West accept Schütz's emendation φίλαις for the MSS' φίλοις. Taplin demurs ((1977b) 233). Even if they enter later, as Friis Johansen and others believe, they are certainly onstage in time for their mistresses to address them as φίλαι δμωΐδες (976).

It is fruitless (at least for present purposes[31]) to speculate about which events, some of them involving action and even occasional violence, were portrayed onstage in the rest of the trilogy. The Chorus in *Aegyptians* (wherever it came in the sequence[32]), if the title refers to the cousins of the Danaids, would seem necessarily to have matched them in number. Since at the beginning of *Danaids* (almost universally placed third) forty-nine of the male cousins have already been murdered, a burning question (to me) is how this bloody deed was handled. Did it happen within the action of the preceding play, with perhaps (as in *Agamemnon* and *Libation Bearers*), a "presentation" of at least some of the corpses, or did it occur ἔξω τοῦ δράματος, between the two plays? The theme of marriage, or at least of cohabitation, came up again in the satyr play *Amymonê*, named after one of the Danaids who thought she had escaped the lustful satyrs only to find herself in the equally lustful arms—and bed—of the god Poseidon.

Oresteia

Agamemnon

"Whether Clytemnestra was present throughout the first song (parodos) of *Ag* or whether she only entered at the end of it must be one of the most disputed stage directions in Greek tragedy" (Taplin (1977b) 280; cf. Taplin (1972) 89–94). If she entered early, i.e. at v. 40 or just after 83, her silent presence will have coloured the audience's visual impressions of the lengthy *parodos*. In any case, she does not actually speak until v. 164. There may have been some stage "business" to match the lighting of the sacrificial fires ordered by her to which the Chorus refer at vv. 261 and 475–477. Perhaps extras were employed. Taplin has Clytemnestra exit at 614 and re-enter at 855 ("with her maids, since 908 ff. does not look like a summons", (1977b) 307 n. 1). His grounds are that "[h]er silent presence throughout the intervening scenes before 854 is highly undesirable" (ibid., 303–304 n. 4). But if she were present, as Denniston-Page ((1957) 117) and others believe, then her silence would be significant—sinisterly so. Cassandra, who had entered with her new master in his chariot toward the end of the second stasimon (the Chorus address him at v. 783), finally breaks her silence and from 1072 on engages with the Chorus in what Webster calls "a long lyric dialogue" ((1970) 126). Her sections are mainly dochmiac throughout

[31] My guesses as to what may have happened can be found at Podlecki (1975) 2–8.

[32] Sommerstein (2008b) 5 ("either the first or the second play"); see Garvie (2006) 183–204.

and thus reinforce the content of her anguished outbursts; the Chorus begin with relatively calm iambic trimeters but finally burst into lyric metres, again mainly dochmiac, for their last three stanzas (1119–1177). I take it that the whole last part of the scene would have been played with appropriate, even exaggerated, gestures to match the vehement language with which Cassandra strips off the various pieces of her prophet's attire from 1264 on. The visual climax of the play comes with Clytemnestra's re-appearance at 1372 with the bodies of her victims, along with the cloth she used to ensnare her husband, as well as the murder weapon (probably, though not quite certainly, a sword). Her change to present tenses with περιστιχίζω ... παίω ... ἐπενδίδωμι ... (1383–1386) may indicate that she mimes these actions onstage.

Libation Bearers

We can only guess how the elaborate *kommos* (vv. 306–478) was staged. The significant "visual" element here is, paradoxically, the frustration of the expectations of the audience that the ghost of Agamemnon might actually appear, as the εἴδωλον of Darius did in *Persians*.[33] It is perhaps not so surprising here as it was in *Agamemnon* that the murderer should emerge from the palace with the corpses of his victims as Orestes does at v. 973, but the audience will certainly have noticed the similarity of these two "mirror" scenes, and the bloody garment that Orestes holds up at 980 as a witness to the justice of his act serves as a kind of bridge between them.[34] The closing lines, with Orestes hallucinating the menacing advances of the Erinyes (1021 to the end), may have been accompanied by appropriately emphatic gestures by the actor.

Eumenides

Guesses abound about how the complicated entries and re-entries of actors and Chorus were staged, but clearly there was much to keep the spectators engaged. Horrified at what she has seen inside Apollo's temple, the Pythia emerges from the shrine on all fours (v. 37), and when all the Erinyes are finally in the orchestra it is clear from the dialogue that they are masked and garbed in a manner that makes them look truly repulsive. The *Life* retails a story

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33 Garvie (2009) 260. There are other parallels between the two plays in the dramatic uses to which their Choruses are put (Podlecki (1972) 198).

34 The parallelism is spoilt somewhat if (as I believe) the now—again—silent Pylades came out of the palace together with his comrade Orestes.

that the Chorus's "second entry … so stunned (ἐκπλῆξαι) the audience that children fainted and women miscarried".[35] Apollo makes a coarse comment about their ugliness (192–194), a point which Athena confirms, but more politely (410–414, 990). What their costumes were like is perhaps suggested by Orestes's crazed vision at the close of *Libation Bearers*: "wearing grey dresses and their hair entwined with numerous snakes" (1049); "an angry trickle drips from their eyes" (1058), a feature that had already caught the attention of the Pythia (they "drip a hateful stream from their eyes", 54).

The appearance of Clytemnestra's ghost, εἴδωλον—unannounced—is a surprise, nor is it clear how she enters: possibly along a *parodos*.

There is a major scene-change from Delphi to Athens after the (somewhat unusual) departure of the Chorus at v. 234. A statue of Athena has been brought in and placed probably somewhere in the orchestra; Orestes addresses and clings to this to get some comfort and protection from his pursuers (242, 259). The Chorus re-enter and sing a second entrance-song (*epiparodos*, 244–275). The astrophic lyric section from 254 on is mainly dochmiac and the language suggests that they may be imitating bloodhounds ("the smell of human blood smiles at me in welcome", 253). The first stasimon is the celebrated "Binding Song" (ὕμνον … δέσμιον 306, ὕμνος … δέσμιος φρενῶν 331–332) and again, one can surmise that the choreography was visually, as well as musically, effective.

How does Athena enter at 397? The text as it stands offers two incompatible modes of conveyance: swooshing in from on high using her aegis as a kind of sail (404; "without wings"), or coming in on a four-horse chariot, probably along the stage-right *parodos* (405). Most commentators choose the former and even Taplin, who once doubted the availability of stage apparatus like the *mēkhanē* in the first half of the fifth century ((1977b) 446 n. 2), later changed his mind. "Given Aeschylus' theatrical inventiveness" (and with this view I heartily concur), he says he is now ready to admit the possibility that the *mēkhanē* "was the most likely staging for the arrival of Athena in *Eumenides*" (Taplin (2007) 73). But the goddess's entry in a chariot would have been more fitting, iconographically and dramatically (many in the audience would have remembered Agamemnon's similar entrance in the opening play), and my preference is to obelize v. 404.[36] However she entered, the goddess's appear-

[35] (T 1) sect. 9, (Csapo and Slater (1994) 260). It is alluded to also in the entry in Pollux cited in n. 6 above. Probably it is *ben trovato* rather than factual.

[36] Scholiast M on v. 397 had no doubts: ἐπὶ ὀχήματος ἔρχεται. See my nn. on 397 and 404/405 (Podlecki (1989) 164–165). Himmelhoch 2005 makes a case for Athena's entrance by chariot *and* retention of v. 404.

ance, bedecked with aegis and in full war regalia, will have been striking. She departs at 489 in the direction of her city, announcing her mission to "choose judges of homicide under oath" (483), and with these in tow and doubtless accompanied by various κωφὰ πρόσωπα she returns at 566. Besides the jurors there were attendants bringing benches, two voting urns, and other paraphernalia, and with them a κῆρυξ. "The final procession of *Eum* was undoubtedly a grand and impressive stage event" (Taplin (1977b) 411), one which "demands a larger number of extras than any other surviving tragedy" (ibid., 80). There will have been attendants who brought the sacrificial victims mentioned by Athena at v. 1007,[37] as well as the torches which the text shows accompanied the final procession (1005, 1022, 1029, 1041). In Athena's last speech the text is unfortunately disturbed at a crucial point, but in v. 1028 the reference to individuals "dressed in scarlet-dyed attire" has generally (and I believe correctly) been taken as the goddess's cue that the Erinyes are to be, or perhaps already have been, re-robed in the crimson cloaks worn by metics in Athens when they took part in official ceremonies like the Panathenaia. The last lines of the play (1032–1056) are a choral celebration in stately dactyls of the truce that has been negotiated through the patient manoeuverings of the city's patron goddess. It is not certain how these subsidiary *choreutai* are to be identified. Taking their lead from a scholion on v. 1032 many editors assign the lines to the προπομποί listed in the ancient *dramatis personae*. West designates them νεωκόροι, "temple-wardens" ((1990a) 294; (1998) 397). Taplin resurrects and endorses Hermann's "plausible theory" that the jurors, who (with a little help from Athena) had decided Orestes's case, simply took on this additional function ((1977b) 237, 393, 411).

Opsis *in the Lost Plays*

Here we are on slipperier ground. Reconstructing lost works on the basis of their presumed plots is a risky enterprise at best; at worst it leads to subjective judgements somewhat lacking in credibility. Still, it is a risk that has to be run if we are to get some inkling, however faint, of what kind of visual effects Aeschylus might have achieved in the roughly 90% of his dramatic output that has not been preserved.

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[37] Athena refers to female πρόσπολοι who are to guard her statue (v. 1024). Whether they are a separate group of extras visible onstage is unclear.

Enough survives of several "cycles" (as they might be called)[38] to give us a fairly clear idea of how the stories were treated. There was an "*Iliad* tetralogy" with, as Taplin puts it, "scenes that made a big impact on the visual arts" ((2007) 84). It comprised in (probably) first position *Myrmidons* (Sommerstein (2008b) 134–135), with Achilles's long silence, already noted, which he finally breaks at fr. 132 b.8, where he says to Phoenix, "I have long been silent …". Third stood *Phrygians* or *Ransoming of Hector*, with Achilles again sitting silently through much of the first part. This contained what must have been a visually strong scene in which a quantity of gold equivalent to the weight of Hector's corpse was weighed out onstage.[39] "The play will doubtless have included laments over Hector by Priam and the chorus" (Sommerstein (2008b) 263). Room must also be found for *Nereids*.[40] How did the chorus of Nereids enter? Possibly in a way that suggested they were riding dolphins.[41] In fr. 150 (in anapaests, so probably from the Chorus's entry) they are described as "crossing the expanse of the sea where dolphins play" (Sommerstein tr.). In Euripides's *Electra* the Chorus of Argive farm women begin the first stasimon by addressing the "glorious ships" that sailed to Troy, escorting "the dances of the Nereids, dances wherein the dolphin that loves the sound of the pipe gamboled in company with the dark-blue prows …" (433–437, Kovacs tr.).[42] But other means of conveyance were available: horses with golden wings drew the Nereids' chariots on the Chest of Kypselos of about 550 BC (Paus. 5.19.8) and pictorial art of various periods shows them with or on horses, fish, and sundry sea-creatures (*LIMC* VI.1, pp. 785–824).

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38 These are generally gathered into tetralogies on the not altogether satisfactory grounds that since Sophocles is reported to have discontinued the practice, Aeschylus's works are to be assembled in this way wherever possible (more on this at Podlecki (2009) 319–320).

39 Schol. *Iliad* 22.351; Lykophron *Alex*. 269–270 with schol. Taplin illustrates and discusses a splendid Apulian volute-krater of c. 350 which he considers "more than likely related" to *Phrygians* ((2007) 85–87; ill. also at p. i).

40 Its exact placement in the sequence (if they did form a sequence) is controversial; see Sommerstein (2008b) 156–161; Podlecki (2009) 320–322.

41 This was proposed by Kossatz-Deissmann (1978) 16, following Webster (1970b) 29. In his discussion of the staging of *Prometheus Bound* Mastronarde raises the possibility that in that play the choreuts "were in individual cars (which could have been no more than lightweight frames worn around the body of the walking choreuts)" ((1990) 267; "… 15 choreuts wearing 'car suits' measuring about 3' wide by 4' long", ibid. 267 n. 60). I owe this ref. to Prof. Liapis.

42 There is iconograpic support for the suggestion of a chorus with or on dolphins: see Trendall and Webster (1971) I.11, 14, 15 from the period 520–480 BC (the dolphin-riders are male, but the presence of aulos-players shows these are choruses). See Webster (1970) 29 and Kossatz-Deissmann (1978) 16. A fine Apulian dinos of the mid-fourth century shows seven Nereids, six of them riding dolphins (the seventh is on a horse), each carrying a piece of armour: greaves, helmet, and so on (*LIMC* VI.1 cat. 344: Ruvo, Museo Jatta J 1496).

Aeschylus's Dionysus plays fall into two groups, a *Lykourgeia* (*Edonians*, *Bassarids*, *Youths* [Νεανίσκοι]¸ and—surprisingly—a satyric *Lycurgus*), and those that treated Pentheus's encounter with the god. Both stories allowed plenty of scope for gory goings-on. In *Edonians* Dionysus, miffed because Lycurgus kept trying to suppress his worship, drove the King of the Edonians mad; he killed his son Dryas with an axe, in the deluded belief that he was cutting a vine-branch.[43] The Bassarids (named for their Thracian fox-skin caps) were driven mad by Dionysus and sicked on Orpheus, who stated a preference for the sun-god Apollo over his half-brother; Orpheus's punishment was dismemberment. To Dionysus's Theban adventures (including his fiery birth) can be assigned five titles; how these are to be apportioned into one or more trilogies continues to be debated.[44] *Semele* or *Water-carriers* may have dealt with—narrated, probably, rather than portrayed—Semele's fiery punishment. A scene from one of these plays left its mark on Plato: the goddess Hera entered in the disguise of a mendicant priestess who begged alms "for the life-giving sons of the Argive river-god Inachus" (*Resp*. 381 d). In *Xantriai*, "Wool-carders", the goddess Lussa, Madness (whose "swift dogs" the Chorus call upon to incite Pentheus in Euripides's *Bacchae* 977), actually appears and graphically describes how her victim (presumably Pentheus) will be rent "from the feet to the top of the head" (fr. 169, Sommerstein tr.). *Weighing of Souls*, *Psykhostasia*, "the only known tragedy in which Zeus was definitely present on stage" (Sommerstein (2008b) 275), contained a visually stunning scene: Zeus held a set of scales with the ψυχαί of Achilles and Memnon in the opposing balance pans while the goddesses Thetis and Eos each pled for her own son's life as the two men fought to the death on the Trojan plain. After the balance tipped in Achilles's favour and Memnon fell in battle at his hands, Eos on the *mēkhanē* (or *geranos*, as it is termed by Pollux 4.130) snatched up her dead son's body and took him to Olympus, where she succeeded in persuading Zeus to grant him immortality.[45]

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43 Discussion and iconography at Séchan (1967) 70–75; Taplin (2007) 68–71.

44 The plays are Σεμέλη ἤ Ὑδροφόροι, Διονύσου Τροφοί(or possibly just Τροφοί), Βάκχαι, Ξάντριαι and Πενθεύς. See Podlecki (2009) 336–338.

45 The reconstruction is based on the Cyclic *Aethiopis* Arg. 2 (West (2003) 112–113), and Pollux. 4. 130 (Csapo and Slater (1994) 397–398). See Sommerstein (2008b) 274–275; Podlecki (2009) 325–326. Taplin (1977b) 431–433 challenges the generally accepted view that the weighing of souls took place on stage and that Zeus himself held the scales, but that still seems to me where the available evidence points, nor do I share West's doubts ((2000a) 345–347 about the authorship of *Psykhostasia*, which West attributes to Aeschylus's son Euphorion.

Heracles appeared ("probably as a god", says Sommerstein (2008b) 75) in *Heraclidae* and described his gruesome immolation, his "skin peeling because of the poison" administered to him by Deianeira (frr. 73b, 75a). *Callisto* presented, or at least referred to, the "horrors or near-horrors of the kind that tragedy loved to exploit" (Sommerstein (2008b) 111): the transformation of the nymph into a bear and the birth of a human son, Arkas, who was fathered on her by Zeus. The boy threateningly pursued his bear-mother into an inviolable sanctuary, or was perhaps cut up and made into a meal by his grandfather Lykaon. *Carians or Europa* probably dramatized the events of *Iliad* 16: Zeus's unwillingness (or inability) to accede to Europa's prayers (see fr. 99) and save his son from Patroclus's spear, and a moving scene in which Sarpedon's corpse, after being bathed by Apollo, was brought back to Caria (that is, Lycia) by Sleep and Death and restored to his grieving mother. Taplin (2007) 72 thinks that Sarpedon's body "may … have been flown into the spectator's view by use of" the *mēkhanē*. There possibly was a similar scene in *Women of Argos*, with Euadne, mother of Capaneus, lamenting the death of her lightning-blasted son in the assault on Thebes by the Seven (fr. 17). *Perrhaibian Women* (Περραιβίδες) seems to have been about Ixion's treachery in refusing to pay his father-in-law Eioneus or Deioneus the gifts that he had been promised as the bride-price for Ixion's marrying the man's daughter Dia. When he came to collect them he was lured into a room specially prepared by Ixion where there was a trap door through which Deioneus fell to a fiery death.[46] In *Philoktetes* the hero describes how the snake "inserted and lodged its teeth" in him (fr. 252); he wonders whether to cut off his foot (fr. 254) and calls on Death Παιών as the "only physician for irremediable ills" (fr. 255). The rending of Actaeon by his own hunting dogs—four in number, and with frightening names—in Τοξότιδες (*Archeresses*)[47] was narrated by a Messenger (fr. 244), but possibly Actaeon's mangled body was carried onstage at the end, as was Pentheus's in Euripides's *Bacchae*.

Lastly, the Prometheus plays. Of this topic almost every aspect is swathed in controversy. Perhaps the least contentious is the fact (or seeming fact) that the *Persians* group of 472 BC ended with a satyric *Prometheus*, which is generally though not universally thought to have been the Π. Πυρκαεύς.

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[46] *Ixion* may have covered the sequel: Zeus's purification of Ixion (mentioned twice in *Eum*., 441 and 717–718) and the latter's sacrilegious passion for Hera.

[47] Sommerstein and others suggested these were nymphs accompanying Artemis, whom Actaeon had offended ((2008b) 244). There are graphic depictions at Kossatz-Deissmann (1978) Tafeln 28–32; Séchan (1967) 132–138.

The basic plot involved Prometheus's bestowal of fire not on humans (as in the back-story to Π. Δεσμώτης) but on the lovable but unruly and oversexed satryrs. Prometheus apparently taught the little beasties how to make torches (shown on numerous vases)[48] and warned them that if they got too close to the flame, they'd be "mourning their beard" like the proverbial goat that had done the same (fr. 207). There were abundant opportunities here for spirited activity, "goat-play" so to speak. From here on the matter gets cloudy. I am not of the fairly large number of critics who think that *Prometheus Bound* has been proven to be indisputably un-Aeschylean.[49] Let us, however, start from the position of some of the nay-sayers, that the (non-extant) *Unbound* was by Aeschylus, but the surviving play "was composed or put together … specifically to be a companion piece" to it, as Taplin proposed ((1975) 464). Well, to judge from the plot, there was plenty of visual (and frightening) action in the *Unbound*: there was a Chorus of grimy Titans, recently released from *their* captivity in Tartarus, who, in one of the preserved fragments say (interestingly for our topic) that they have come "to observe" (ἐποψόμενοι) Prometheus's trials and the suffering that his bondage entails (fr. 190). In response, Prometheus tells them to "behold" (*aspicite*) him "bound and chained to these rugged rocks" (fr. 193.2),[50] the wedges still visible which Hephaestus's "cruel skill" had driven though his broken body. He is unable to stave off the attacks of the bird Zeus has sent because he is held fast in Zeus's chains, "as you see I am" (*ut videtis*, fr. 193. 20). At some point Heracles turned up and Prometheus instructed him about the best route to follow in pursuit of (probably) Geryon's cattle and the golden apples of the Hesperides. Returned from his exploits, Heracles shot the dreaded bird—onstage, as is apparent from the single line cited from his prayer on aiming his bow, "May Apollo the hunter direct my arrow straight!" (fr. 200, Sommerstein tr.). The title guarantees that Prometheus was freed, and there was almost certainly also a rapprochement effected between the former adversaries, but how exactly this was brought about is anyone's guess and in another single-line citation, Prometheus, still iron-firm in his hostility, refers to Heracles as the "dearest son of an enemy father" (fr. 201). Sommerstein thinks that "it is possible that [Zeus] appeared in *Prometheus Unbound*" ((2008b) 275).

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48 Beazley 1939.

49 See Podlecki (2005) 197–200. I am pleased to see that recently Edith Hall has joined the small group of the "unpersuaded" ((2010b) 230).

50 Sommerstein's tr. of the passage in *Tusc. Disp.* 2.23–25, which is Cicero's (presumably faithful) rendering of the original Greek.

Given the lingering doubts (not mine) of the status of *Prometheus Bound*, it would perhaps be imprudent to do more than list in summary fashion those elements that bear on the present topic. Here is a play that was "spectacular" in every sense of the term,[51] with something to impact the visual sensibilities of the most blasé viewer: Kratos's ugly mask (v. 78), which was almost certainly matched by one worn by the mute Bia; Oceanids speeding in, perhaps in some unusual way;[52] Oceanus's arrival on his fantastical hippocamp; Io, her metamorphsis into a cow already begun (588), entering at 562 with a jerky song almost entirely in dochmiacs; Hermes's sudden appearance at 944, probably on the *mēkhanē*; and the final cataclysm, where the apocalyptic language might have been matched by some scenic (and almost certainly also sonic) effects.[53] A visual point that has been overlooked is Prometheus's repeated urgings of all within his hearing to "view", "regard", "be beholders" of, and thus be able to testify to, the maltreatment he is suffering through the agency of the ungrateful new despot on Olympus whose benefactor he had been.[54]

Aristotle advised the budding dramatist to "visualize the incidents [of the plot] as much as he can; he will then realize them vividly as if they were being enacted before his eyes".[55] Luckily for us, Aeschylus seems to have been instinctively doing just this as he composed—and directed—his very visual dramas.

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51 As Mastronarde aptly remarks, the work "presents … unprecedented challenges in the mechanics of its production" ((1990) 266).

52 Possibly on winged carts (Kossatz-Deissmann (1978) 16, citing in n. 94 Eduard Fraenkel and Rose Unterberger).

53 Pollux mentions a κεραυνοσκοπεῖον and βροντεῖον (4.127, 130) and describes the latter as "bags filled with pebbles and blown up, which are knocked against bronze vessels below and behind the stage" (Csapo and Slater (1994) 397). Pickard-Cambridge ((1946) 236) suggested that the κεραυνοσκοπεῖον "may have been a special kind of revolving prism, raised high up, with a metal surface flashing in the sun." There is no evidence of when such devices were first introduced, but the view that they were unavailable to Aeschylus is based largely on *a priori* reasoning: a "primitive" theatre would have had no use for such relatively advanced techniques of theatrical realism.

54 I have analyzed some of these aspects at Podlecki 1973.

55 1455a23–26, Grube tr. ((1958) 35).

THEATRICALITY AND VOTING IN *EUMENIDES*: "ΨΗΦΟΝ Δ' ΟΡΕΣΤΗΙ ΤΗΝΔ' ΕΓΩ ΠΡΟΣΘΗΣΟΜΑΙ"*

Geoffrey W. Bakewell

Capital court cases make for compelling drama. This was as true in ancient Greece[1] as it remains today, and the voting scene in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* (lines 711–753)[2] ranks as one of the most theatrical moments in the entire *Oresteia*. Athena has just finished instructing the court trying Orestes for matricide, saying that it is now time for them to stand, raise their ballots, and do justice (ὀρθοῦσθαι δὲ χρὴ/ καὶ ψῆφον αἴρειν καὶ διαγνῶναι δίκην, 708–709). With Apollo and the Erinyes trading angry reproaches, the jurors proceed to an altar or table, where each deposits his voting token in one of two urns. The goddess then speaks again, claiming it as her task to render a final verdict (λοισθίαν κρῖναι δίκην, 734). She declares her intention to vote for the defendant, explains her reasoning, and states that a tie will result in acquittal. The suspense is palpable as she herself approaches the urns and deposits her token. The spectators undoubtedly sympathized with Orestes' anguished

* I thank Toph Marshall, Jennifer Wise, Vayos Liapis, and the members of the Humanities Research Group at Creighton University for their extremely helpful comments on earlier versions of this piece.

1 Suspense likewise attends the mock voting scene in Aristophanes *Wasps*, with Philocleon's question at line 993 (πῶς ἄρ' ἠγωνίσμεθα;, "What is the outcome?") recalling that of Orestes at *Eumenides* 744. The dramatic possibilities of such trials were not lost on prose authors. In Book III, Thucydides juxtaposes quasi-judicial capital cases against the cities of Mytilene and Plataea. And Plato stands the trope on its head in his contrarian *Apology*, which concludes not with the imposition of the death penalty on Socrates, but with an ironic question about its significance (42a).

2 The preserved text of *Eumenides*' trial contains significant difficulties. Taplin (1989) 398 notes *inter alia* three important elements that are absent from the scene yet mentioned or hinted at elsewhere in the play: the summoning of witnesses; the swearing of an oath by the jurors; and a founding speech by Athena. He further argues, on largely formal grounds (400), "that Aeschylus' text of the trial in *Eum*[*enides*] has been considerably disrupted and cut, and is corrupt on a scale which has not been seriously entertained since the heady days of Kirchhoff and Wecklein. While 566–571, 575–677, and 711–777 are substantially as Aeschylus left them, lines 678–710 have been displaced and altered, and lines 572–574 are the corrupted edges of a large lacuna." Fortunately for us, the lines analyzed here belong to one of the sounder portions of the scene. Unless otherwise noted, the Aeschylean texts presented are those of West (1990); all translations are my own.

cry: "How will the contest turn out?" (πῶς ἀγὼν κριθήσεται;, 744).[3] The very next line emphasizes the visual dimension of the proceedings, as the Erinyes ask their mother Night whether she is watching: ἆρ' ὁρᾷς τάδε; (745). *Mutatis mutandis*, Samuel Johnson was right: nothing concentrates the mind quite like the prospect of a hanging—especially someone else's.[4]

To date, scholars studying this passage have focused on a number of important issues, including the number and stage movements of the jurors;[5] the related question of whether Athena's ballot is a tying or a casting vote;[6] the rationale behind her decision;[7] and the implications of the verdict.[8] Yet an important theatrical element of the voting scene has been comparatively neglected to date. At line 735, the goddess vows her support for the defendant: ψῆφον δ' Ὀρέστῃ τήνδ' ἐγὼ προσθήσομαι ("I will cast this vote for Orestes"). The best reading of the line is that a voting token is actually present, and that at some point thereafter Athena places it in the urn for acquittal.[9] The main

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[3] How much the audience knew or suspected about the trial's outcome is unclear. While Jacoby (1954) *FGH* IIIB Suppl. p. 24 claims "that Aischylus was the first to bring Orestes before the Areopagus," Sommerstein (1989) 5 argues more tentatively that prior versions of the tale existed. Even if the latter is correct, many of the spectators might have been unfamiliar with such pre-Aeschylean works. At *Poetics* 1453a20, Aristotle lists Orestes among the heroes often treated by tragedians. Yet elsewhere (1451b25–26) he states that such standard stories, although delightful, were familiar to only a few (καὶ τὰ γνώριμα ὀλίγοις γνώριμά ἐστιν, ἀλλ' ὅμως εὐφραίνει πάντας). Nor would the existence of the *proagōn* necessarily change matters. If the practice dates back as early as 458, we still do not know how much poets actually revealed about their upcoming productions. (On evidence for the *proagōn*, see Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 67–68; Csapo and Slater (1995) 109–110, nos. 4–8.) Finally, even an audience expecting Orestes to be acquitted might not know how this would transpire.

[4] Hill and Powell (1934) iii.167.

[5] Many scholars hold that ten jurors cast their ballots *seriatim* during the ten couplets comprising lines 711–730. For a judicious review of the scholarship surrounding these lines and the controversial triplet at 731–733, see Sommerstein (1989) 222–225.

[6] Tying: see Wilamowitz (1893) ii.332, (1914a) 183–185; Gagarin (1975). Casting: see Hester (1981); Conacher (1987) 164–166.

[7] Winnington-Ingram (1949) 144–145; Goldhill (1984) 258–259; Zeitlin (1996) 115–119.

[8] E.g. Conacher (1987) 168–169. Sommerstein (1989) 221 notes that the action also recalls the earlier choral division at the moment of the king's murder in *Agamemnon*. On "mirror" scenes in general see Taplin (1989) 100–103.

[9] *Pace* Goldhill (1984) 258, whose emphasis on ambiguity in the language of the *Oresteia* leads him to stress "the difficulty of reading a dramatic text as specifying its performance." His specific objection that the tense of προσθήσομαι is future is not however compelling. Gagarin (1975) 124 n. 13 plausibly suggests that the verb implies that Athena deposits her tying vote sometime before line 742. Or the future tense could also be 'performative', announcing an act that is already under way; the promise held in such futures is often fulfilled by its mere enunciation. On the use of the future tense to emphasize present intention see Goodwin (1890) 20 para. 72.

reason is the deictic τήνδ' modifying ψῆφον.[10] But another comes some fifteen lines later, when Apollo cautions the anonymous jurors to count the votes correctly. To this injunction he adds the further, gnomic comment: γνώμης δ' ἀπούσης πῆμα γίγνεται μέγα,/ †βαλοῦσά τ' οἶκον† ψῆφος ὤρθωσεν μία ("great suffering comes from lack of judgment, whereas a single cast vote saves a house," 750–751).[11] The spectators' attention is thereby concentrated on the remarkable power of a single ballot, ψῆφος … μία. And we should therefore understand Athena at line 735 as not merely having hers in her hand, but holding it aloft, the better to serve as a representative example.

Many of the spectators will have been acquainted with both the prop and the process. As citizens of the young democracy, they had become accustomed to hearing arguments and casting their votes in various bodies, above all the popular law courts.[12] As fifth-century jurors, they made use of the same one-ballot, two-urn system depicted here by Aeschylus.[13] Moreover, following the introduction of sortition for the archonships in 487/6,[14] the membership of the Areopagus had gradually become more diverse; more spectators were thus familiar with its workings.[15] Collard rightly terms the

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[10] According to Taplin (1989) 150, it is "usually the case" that the deictic ὅδε refers to someone "present in sight of the audience or at least to be imagined as within sight of the speaker." (Ὅδε can also refer with some vividness to absent persons who have just been spoken of, and are thus present to the speaker's mind. For examples of such usage see Lloyd-Jones (1965) 241–242; Diggle (1994) 49 n. 2; Hutchinson (1985) 111 *ad* 408.) Taplin (1989) 150 adds that when tragedy uses ὅδε to denote absent people, they are usually nearby within the *skēnē*. It is worth noting that in *Libation Bearers*, Aeschylus twice uses a deictic to refer to an important prop that is clearly present (φάρος τόδε, "this cloak," (1011), ὕφασμα … τόδε, "this weaving" (1015)). Similar to the passage we are considering (*Eumenides* 735) is the terminology used to describe Philocleon's voting token in Aristophanes *Wasps*: *τηνδὶ* λαβὼν *τὴν ψῆφον* ἐπὶ τὸν ὕστερον/ μύσας παρᾷξον κἀπόλυσον ὦ πάτερ ("Take *this ballot*, close your eyes, bring it to the farther urn, and let him off, father," 987–988).

[11] There is no fully satisfactory emendation of the first part of line 751. See West (1990b) ad loc. and Sommerstein (1989) 233. The phrase ψῆφος … μία is, however, widely deemed sound.

[12] On the variegated terminology referring to the popular courts see Boegehold (1995), who claims (18–19) that "'*heliaia*', as the entire system of popular courts, distinguished that particular area of the state's functioning from that of the boule and the ekklesia … One could say 'heliaia' to invoke 'court' in its generic sense when, for example, defining court procedures for allies … or authorizing a scrutiny of qualifications for citizenship … In such uses, 'heliaia' is interchangeable with τὰ δικαστήρια or τὸ δικαστήριον."

[13] Boegehold (1995) 21 notes that "the change in voting procedure … from one pebble to two specially designed ballots, seems to have been made sometime after 405 BCE but before the mid-4th century."

[14] *AthPol* 22.5; see Rhodes (1993) 272–274.

[15] Ephialtes' reassignment in 462 of many of the Areopagus' powers to other bodies, including the dikasteria, will have been the topic of many conversations public and private. On

dikasts[16] in *Eumenides* the audience's "historical forebears,"[17] adding that the *Oresteia*'s legal emphasis "make[s] the constantly ambiguous issues of the trilogy readily accessible to the regular experience of Aeschylus' audience *as jurors*."[18]

The poet thus turns something as ordinary as a small rock or a seashell[19] into a focalizer[20] for the entire voting scene, and invests it with extraordinary dramatic power. It not only has the ability to save or kill a man, but to preserve or destroy his house as well. Seen in this light, Athena's ψῆφος must rank among the most significant stage properties in the *Oresteia*, and is a worthy successor to the crimson textiles of the *Agamemnon* and the sword of Orestes in *Libation Bearers*. Like them, it has a profoundly metaphorical dimension, and embodies a particular approach to justice (Δίκη). Scholars have repeatedly shown that Clytemnestra's cloths can be read as a seamless demand for redress on multiple levels: for the sacrifice of Iphigenia, for the sack of Troy, for the criminal past of the House of Atreus, for the countless injustices visited upon the female by the male.[21] And the blade wielded by Orestes likewise exacts vengeance not just for his murdered father, but also for the hardships of his own exile, and for his sister Electra's isolation and imprisonment. In similar fashion, at the culminating moment of the voting scene in *Eumenides*, Athena presents her ballot and starts to move in the general direction of the accused. She reaches the urns and deposits her

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the reforms themselves see *AthPol* 25.1–4 and Rhodes (1993) 311–322. On Aeschylus' attitude toward them see Macleod (1982) 127–129.

16 The noun δικασταί is repeatedly used to describe the jurors (81, 483, 684, 743).

17 (2002) xvi–xvii.

18 (2002) lvi (italics added). In discussing *Eumenides*' court, Wilamowitz (1893) ii.333 argues "alles was wir als besonders areopagitisch kennen, ist fern gehalten" ["everything that we recognizes as peculiar to the Areopagus is removed"]. He concludes (334) that "diese Athena und dieser Areopag sind 458 für die modern empfindenden gedichtet, für die verehrer des volksgerichtes, und der ganze proceß ist so gehalten, daß er die formen allein hervorhebt, die diesem gerichte mit jedem gerichte gemeinsam sind" ["this Athena and this Areopagus were composed in 458 for modern sensibilities, for those who prized the dikasterion, and the whole trial is conducted in such a way as to emphasize only the features which these two institutions [Areopagus and dikasterion] have in common"].

19 On the original use of these objects as ballots, see Boegehold (1995) 28. The earliest "official" bronze ballots found in the Agora date to the fourth century (ibid., 82).

20 Taplin (1978) 77 argues that stage properties "are a particularly straightforward means for the dramatist to put his meaning into tangible, overt form." At *Poetics* 1455a22–23, Aristotle advises the tragic poet to construct his plots and elaborate them with diction in "as visual a way as possible" (ὅτι μάλιστα πρὸ ὀμμάτων τιθέμενον). On props as focalizers in comedy see Revermann (2006a) 243–244 and this volume.

21 E.g. Goheen (1955) 115–126.

token with a vigorous, downward motion of her arm.[22] At least one visual meaning seems clear: the moment of reckoning has arrived. The tapestries led Agamemnon to his death, and the sword forced Clytemnestra to hers.[23] Now the ψῆφος has come for Orestes.

But of course Athena's ballot does not kill Orestes: it saves him. Although following in the train of these other prominent objects representing claims to justice, it nevertheless departs from the older patterns pervading the House of Atreus. Some of these differences are manifest in the way Aeschylus may have staged the balloting. I say "may have" advisedly, for the poet himself left us no stage directions, the surviving *parepigraphai* are unhelpful in this regard,[24] and some inferences are stronger than others. Nevertheless, the views sketched here lie well within the scholarly mainstream. Let us begin with the backdrop. In the preceding plays, the *skēnē* may have been painted to depict the ancestral palace of the Atreidae.[25] In *Eumenides* the haunting, looming presence, whose walls could all but speak,[26] is gone. In its place stands an outline of a temple to Athena on the Akropolis.[27] Located somewhat to the front of the temple, at the rear of the orchestra, was a set of benches carried on by the jurors.[28] And in front of them was the *thymele*, or perhaps a

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22 The goddess later reverses this movement at line 752, raising her arm to declare Orestes the victor. On the gesture see Boegehold (1989).

23 Taplin (1989) 356 comments on the extensive parallelism of the two earlier scenes: "a man and a woman dispute over going into the house. It is a matter of victory and defeat, life and death."

24 See Sommerstein (1989) 105 *ad* 117.

25 The *Oresteia* is widely thought to make the first dramatic use of the *skēnē* qua building. According to Padel (1990) 348, "the likelihood is that from the first, tragic scene painting consisted of flat panels, painted with architectural shapes—columns, pediments, roofs—attached more or less permanently to the *skēnē* wall." Fitton-Brown (1984) 11 argues that given *Eumenides*' changes of venue, "the locations in the *Oresteia* cannot have been fixed by means of painted scenery."

26 *Agamemnon* 37–38.

27 See Wilamowitz (1914a) 180: "für den Wechsel des Schauplatzes [in *Eumenides*] war in der Pause gar nicht viel zu tun nötig. Die Tempelfront blieb; sie bedeutete nun einen anderen Tempel" ["not much had to be done during the interlude for the change of dramatic locale in *Eumenides*. The temple façade remained, denoting now another temple"]. He adds (181) "daß der Schauplatz bei Athena, also auf der athenischen Burg spielt, ist klar and sogar auch zugestanden" ["it is clear and indeed stated that the [voting scene] occurs at Athena's [temple], that is, on the Athenian Akropolis"]. See further Wilamowitz (1893) ii.334–335. By contrast, Sommerstein (1989) 123 argues that "if one has to specify where the action is located from [line] 235 to the end of the play, one cannot say anything more precise than 'Athens.' In the present scene [i.e., lines 235–298] we must be on the Akropolis, in fact *inside* the temple of Athena Polias where the παλαιὸν βρέτας (80) was housed. But the trial scene takes place on the Areopagus (685 ff.)."

28 Sommerstein (1989) 185 suggests that, based on Aristophanes *Wasps* 90, it is more

table, atop which rested a pair of urns.[29] As the voting begins, the jurors rise, with their vertical movements recalling other actions earlier in the trilogy: the watchman rousing himself at the start of *Agamemnon*, the king standing and alighting from his chariot, the Erinyes stirring from sleep at the start of *Eumenides*. Something momentous is afoot.

The break with the past becomes immediately apparent in the direction that the jurors and Athena move to cast their ballots. In both *Agamemnon* and *Libation Bearers*, the justice-bringing props moved away from the audience and approached the impenetrable wall of the palace façade.[30] Clytemnestra's textiles ushered Agamemnon to and through the deadly door, while Orestes' sword[31] drove his mother into the house in her turn. But in *Eumenides*, Athena and her ballot likely move in the opposite direction, away from the *skēnē* and towards the audience.[32] The implications are profound. For one thing, justice has become more transparent: administered in an outdoor setting, it is now visible to and verifiable by all. For another, Athena has repeatedly addressed the jurors as the Athenian people, the Ἀττικὸς λεώς (681); their movement toward their peers in the audience suggests that the *demos* now has a greater role to play in judging the affairs of its "brilliant dynasts."[33] Put simply, justice takes a new course in *Eumenides*.[34]

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likely that the jurors sat on benches rather than on the ground or putative steps leading to the *skēnē*.

29 Sommerstein (1989) 185: "there must also have been a table on which stood two voting urns, bearing distinctive marks (perhaps letters) to show which was for condemnation and which for acquittal; since this table was the focus of the audience's attention for a considerable time (711–753), it should be prominently placed, well forward in the orchestra." Cf. Wilamowitz (1893) ii.332–333: "wo die Urnen standen, wird nicht klar, da sie sowol vor der Gottin stehend gedacht werden können, wie auch die Gottin während ihrer Rede sich an den Tisch begeben konnte" ["where the urns stood is not clear, because they can be imagined as standing before the goddess, or she could move to the table during her speech"].

30 On the general significance of the *skēnē* and its fateful door see Padel (1990) 354–356. On Clytemnestra's control of the doorway in *Agamemnon* see Taplin (1989) 300. Garvie (1986) xlii notes that in *Libation Bearers* "we are still conscious of the palace door … behind which Clytaemestra waits, and through which Orestes must eventually gain admittance."

31 Taplin (1989) 359 argues that Orestes' sword is likely visible at *Libation Bearers* 973. Clytemnestra's call for the "man-killing axe" (ἀνδροκμῆτα πέλεκυν) at line 889 and Orestes' unusually rapid entrance shortly thereafter (on which see Taplin (1989) 351–352) suggest that the sword made its initial appearance even earlier.

32 As implied by e.g. Sommerstein's reconstruction ((1989) 185).

33 Griffith (1995) 124. See also Wise, who interprets ((1998) 166) the vote of Athena as "an affirmation of the benefits of a public jury system, a celebration of a citizen's authority to make such judgments."

34 For a comparable symbolic change, consider the alterations made to the Roman Catholic Mass following Vatican II, when: 1) the altar was moved forward from the rear wall of the

Another crucial difference is that the ballots are cast by disinterested parties. As Sommerstein notes, despite the frequent legal metaphors, "in reality justice/punishment in *Agamemnon* invariably consists in the taking of violent revenge by the injured party or his/her representative."[35] Zeitlin likewise observes that while Orestes' actions in *Libation Bearers* constitute a step forward, on occasion he too relapses into the old ways.[36] The hands carrying the ballots in *Eumenides* thus convey a broader shift, with a court system replacing the legal practice of self-help. The placement of the contending parties emphasizes this development visually. According to Sommerstein, Orestes and the Erinyes were probably located on "opposite sides of the orchestra; the chorus will have grouped themselves behind their leader."[37] I envision his separation as taking the form of a stage left/stage right split. Standing downstage from the benches at the rear of the orchestra and upstage from the altar/table towards the front, the opposing parties will then have formed an up-to-down gauntlet through which the jurors had to pass before voting.

The urns into which the ballots are cast are fraught with significance. The word used to describe them at line 742 is τευχέων.[38] In the preceding plays, this same term was repeatedly connected with the deaths of men. At *Agamemnon* 435, for instance, the chorus refers to the urns that arrive from Troy filled with the ashes of dead warriors.[39] At line 1128 in the same play, Cassandra foresees Agamemnon's death in a well-watered tub (πίτνει δ' ⟨ἐν⟩ ἐνύδρωι τεύχει).[40] And at line 99 in *Libation Bearers*, Electra uses an urn to bring to her dead father the liquid offerings commanded by her mother. In *Eumenides*, by contrast, the contents of the urns give life. Apollo makes this clear at line 748, when he tells the vote-counters "to count correctly the shakings-out of ballots" (πεμπάζετ' ὀρθῶς ἐκβολὰς ψήφων). If the voting urns were made of

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sanctuary; and 2) the Celebrant consecrating the Host stood with his face rather than his back to the congregation.

35 Sommerstein (1989) 19.

36 Zeitlin (1965) 497–498: "the restoration of his patrimony as a secondary motive may be evidence that [Orestes] is not the perfect dispenser of justice … [R]elatively free though he may be of base and deceptive motives, he might also have become corrupted by his role as avenger."

37 Sommerstein (1989) 185.

38 LSJ s.v. state that in tragedy, the word is used of "a vessel of any kind." According to Boegehold (1995) 210, "the urns that served as receptacles for the ballots [in classical Athens] are variously called *kadoi, kadiskoi, hydriai*, or *amphoreis*."

39 *Agamemnon* 437 depicts Ares as a "gold-exchanger of bodies" who send urns packed with ash back to Argos. On the metaphor see Bakewell (2007).

40 Boegehold (1995) 210 adduces literary and pictorial evidence of *hydriai* serving as voting urns.

metal and not clay,[41] this might have additional implications.[42] And once the ballots have been exposed and tabulated, their power is spent; they are not brandished again later, like the deadly garment at *Libation Bearers* (980 ff.). Put differently, the justice dispensed in *Eumenides* is lasting; unlike robe and sword, the ballot does not give rise to claim and counter-claim.

There is one final dimension of Athena's ψῆφος to consider: the prop provides another example of Aeschylus' penchant for making the verbal visual. Many scholars have shown how the poet's chains of imagery become increasingly concrete in the course of the *Oresteia*.[43] For instance, the bindings on Iphigenia become enmeshed with the net cast over Troy; these fibers are in turn interwoven with the cloths leading into the palace and the robe constricting Agamemnon. And all these images are of a piece with the garment displayed by Orestes.[44] Athena's ballot is likewise a physical summation of the *Oresteia*'s insistent focus on law.[45] Daube showed that *Agamemnon* in particular is steeped in legal metaphor.[46] Nowhere is this clearer than at lines 810–818, when Agamemnon enters. He begins his triumphal homecoming by likening the destruction of Troy to the outcome of a trial conducted by the gods:

πρῶτον μὲν Ἄργος καὶ θεοὺς ἐγχωρίους
δίκη προσειπεῖν, τοὺς ἐμοὶ μεταιτίους
νόστου δικαίων θ' ὧν ἐπραξάμην πόλιν
Πριάμου· δίκας γὰρ οὐκ ἀπὸ γλώσσης θεοὶ
κλύοντες ἀνδροθνῆτας Ἰλιοφθόρους[47]
ἐς αἱματηρὸν τεῦχος οὐ διχορρόπως
ψήφους ἔθεντο· τῶι δ' ἐναντίωι κύτει
ἐλπὶς προσήιει χειρὸς οὐ πληρουμένωι.
καπνῶι δ' ἁλοῦσα νῦν ἔτ' εὔσημος πόλις·

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[41] According to *AthPol* 68.3, by the fourth century a bronze urn collected the ballots that "counted," whereas a wooden one got the discards. Rhodes (1993) 731 conjectures that "at an earlier stage in the history of the courts ordinary [i.e., clay] amphorae were used." Taplin (in Hart (2003) 132) notes that in Peter Hall's 1981 staging, the auditory dimension of the voting scene was crucial: "you heard the pebble drop."

[42] According to Lyons (2003) 94, in ancient Greece valuable metal objects were generally associated with men rather than women; the use of bronze urns might therefore be one more sign marking Athena's court and its justice as a male institution.

[43] E.g. Zeitlin (1965) 463.

[44] Taplin (1978) 81 notes the resemblance between Clytemnestra's cloths and *Libation Bearers*' robe: "it is unlikely that the same stage property was used throughout both for the coverlets and the trap; but even so the associations between them are clear."

[45] On the trilogy's concern with legal matters see e.g. Collard (2002) lvi.

[46] (1938) 104–112.

[47] The reading ἀνδροθνῆτας Ἰλιοφθόρους is that of Page (1972) et al.; on the phrase's soundness see Fraenkel (1950) ii.375–376.

(It is right to address first Argos and its native gods,
who helped bring about my return and the justice
I exacted from Priam's city. For the gods, not hearing oral pleas,
Unanimously placed their man-killing, Ilion-destroying ballots
Into the urn of blood, and while hope approached
The other urn, it was not filled by the hand.
The convicted city is conspicuous even now by its smoke.)

Important elements of this earlier, metaphorical trial are realized on-stage in the judicial proceedings of *Eumenides*. In both cases, justice results from collaboration between mortals and the divine.[48] Moreover, the power of the ballot itself is stressed each time.[49] Each voting process involves two urns, into which ballots are cast secretly.[50] And in each instance, suspense attends the outcome. Agamemnon intends his metaphor to justify the Trojan War. The conflict was a trial writ large, in which he stood as accuser and Troy the accused; the gods served as jurors and cast their votes. One might say that in his view, the city was convicted can(n)onically. The smoke (καπνῶι) enveloping it even now is a conspicuous (εὔσημος) sign of the outcome.[51]

And yet the differences between the trial imagined by the king and that conducted in *Eumenides* are even more significant, for they highlight the injustice of the first proceeding in comparison with the second. For one thing, in the earlier metaphor, only the gods vote, whereas in the staged trial the vast majority of the jurors are human. The suggestion is that we have come a long way from the world of *Agamemnon*, where the justice of Zeus

48 Fraenkel (1950) ii.371 notes that in Aeschylus and Sophocles, the adjective μεταίτιος "always denotes a share of responsibility."

49 Unlike *Eumenides*, *Agamemnon* places particular emphasis on the ballot's capacity to destroy: ἀνδροθνῆτας, 'Ιλιοφθόρους/ … / ψήφους (814–816); cf. *Eumenides* 750–751, discussed above.

50 Particulars of the clause at *Agamemnon* 816–817 (τῶι δ' ἐναντίωι κύτει/ ἐλπὶς προσήιει χειρὸς οὐ πληρουμένωι) suggest Aeschylus may be depicting the procedure whereby a short wickerwork cone known as a *kemos* was placed atop the opening of both urns, which were located side-by-side. The small opening made it difficult to insert more than one ballot, and the cone prevented spectators from seeing which urn received it. See Boegehold (1995) 28, with n. 32. He also argues (ibid., 22 n. 5) that secret balloting may have been connected with the institution of pay for dikasts sometime between 462 and 458. The fact that in *Eumenides* Athena, unlike the human jurors, reveals the nature of her vote reflects the poet's dramatic need to show that she is on Orestes' side. See Wilamowitz (1893) ii.332: "der Dichter mußte einen Ausweg wählen, der das Urteil sowol motivierte wie als Götterwillen hinstellte: der Gedanke durfte nicht aufkommen, daß Athena überstimmte wäre" ["the poet had to find an exception, both to explain the verdict and to depict it as the will of the gods: the thought that Athena had been outvoted could not be allowed to arise"].

51 LSJ s.v. ἁλίσκομαι note that the verb is frequently used (II.2) is frequently used in a legal sense to denote conviction and condemnation.

was at some level inscrutable. In the Athenian court, by contrast, true justice is a product of men, and intelligible to them.[52] For another, the god-jurors in *Agamemnon* are described as δίκας … οὐκ ἀπὸ γλώσσης θεοὶ/ κλύοντες. According to Fraenkel, "the point is that the gods, by virtue of their own divine insight, hear the claims direct, and not as a human judge does by way of speeches from the parties involved and the examination of witnesses."[53] But the phrase is simultaneously "disturbing," as it intimates that Agamemnon's gods may simply have disregarded the pleas of the Trojans.[54] In *Eumenides*, by contrast, Athena places great emphasis on both parties' right to speak and be heard,[55] and assures the Erinyes that their claims received full consideration.[56]

And then there is the matter of the verdict. The trial described in *Agamemnon* results in conviction, that of *Eumenides*, in acquittal. More significant still is the fact that the earlier play's metaphor depicts a mass trial, with a single proceeding used against a group of defendants, the inhabitants of Troy.[57] But in the later trial, the fate of Argos is separate from that of Orestes. Although he does swear that his acquittal has made his countrymen reliable allies of Athens (762–766), there is no hint that they would have been punished had he been convicted. Perhaps the most important difference is the disparity in the vote totals. According to Agamemnon, the gods reached their verdict against Troy unanimously, οὐ διχορρόπως.[58] But the *Iliad*, of course, casts a number of the gods as stalwart supporters of Troy. And *Agamemnon* itself raises insistent doubts about whether the destruction of Priam's city was truly just. The chorus, for instance, back Agamemnon and his cause. Yet in

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52 See Macleod (1982) 134; Rose (1992) 250. Sommerstein (1989) 225 observes that "if mortals and immortals act together as partners—partners almost but not quite equal—that is thoroughly in conformity with the spirit of a play which narrows to an extraordinary extent the gulf in power between men and gods."

53 (1950) ii.375. See also Goldhill (1984) 66.

54 Macleod (1982) 133–134.

55 According to the oath cited in Demosthenes *Against Timocrates*, the classical Athenian juror promised to listen to accuser and defendant equally (καὶ ἀκροάσομαι τοῦ τε κατηγόρου καὶ τοῦ ἀπολογουμένου ὁμοίως ἀμφοῖν, 24.151).

56 E.g. lines 795–796.

57 See Macleod (1982) 134; Sommerstein (1989) 21. The injustice would not have been lost on the audience. At Thucydides 3.36, an Athenian assembly in 428 re-opens the case of Mytilene, all of whose men had been condemned to death: "and on the following day they regretted it immediately, considering that they had enacted a savage and weighty decree, to destroy an entire city rather than the guilty" (καὶ τῇ ὑστεραίᾳ μετάνοιά τις εὐθὺς ἦν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἀναλογισμὸς ὠμὸν τὸ βούλευμα καὶ μέγα ἐγνῶσθαι, πόλιν ὅλην διαφθεῖραι μᾶλλον ἢ οὐ τοὺς αἰτίους).

58 For a similar usage, see Aeschylus *Suppliant Women* 605, ἔδοξεν Ἀργείοισιν, οὐ διχορρόπως ("the Argives decided unanimously"). Fraenkel (1950) iii.589 paraphrases the words to mean "with an unambiguous result, in a decision leaving no room for doubt."

the second stasimon, even they express misgivings about the venture. True, they begin by faulting Helen and Troy for the war. But as Knox has shown, their lion imagery comes back to bite the Greeks, implicating them in crimes as well.[59] Their conclusion in the fourth antistrophe is worth noting: "Justice shines in smoky dwellings, and honors the righteous life" (Δίκα δὲ λάμπει μὲν ἐν δυσκάπνοις δώμασιν,/ τὸν δ' ἐναίσιμον τίει/ βίον, 774–776). But as the end of Agamemnon's legal metaphor reminds us, it is the houses at Troy that now smoke (818). And in contrast to the unanimous verdict imagined by the king in *Agamemnon*, the relatively even division of votes in *Eumenides* (753) suggests that elements of justice can be found in the claims of both sides.

In conclusion, the ballot that Athena holds aloft and casts at lines 734–741 is a focalizer for the new type of Δίκη dispensed in *Eumenides*. This important stage property, highlighted by the deictic τήνδ', replaces the self-help sought by Clytemnestra with deadly fabrics and by Orestes with the sword. The goddess' ψῆφος stands for an approach to justice that takes into account competing viewpoints, and thus proves more transparent, more impartial, more communal, and more lasting. It represents the triumph not of guile or violence, but of the good kind of πειθώ,[60] a "persuasion" that is rooted in oaths and rules, evidence and arguments. In *Libation Bearers,* Electra famously asked (120) whether she should pray for the arrival of a judge (δικαστής) or an avenger (δικηφόρος) to press her case. The ballot cast by Athena in *Eumenides* now seals the verdict of her court's jurors, dikasts who bring both justice (δίκη) and victory (νίκη).

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59 (1952) 19–22.

60 Macleod (1982) 135 notes that by the end of *Eumenides*, "persuasion … is no longer as earlier in the trilogy a force that leads to crime or death … it is now the agent of the continuing peace and happiness of the city."

UNDER ATHENA'S GAZE: AESCHYLUS' *EUMENIDES* AND THE TOPOGRAPHY OF *OPSIS*

Peter Meineck

The performance space at the Sanctuary of Dionysos Eleuthereus, that we have come to know as the "Theatre of Dionysos," was situated in the historic and religious heart of the city—a sacred space surrounded by monuments and cult sites of great significance to Athenian cultural identity.[1] I want to demonstrate how reading an ancient play with the physical environment where it was originally staged in mind might open up another dimension of appreciation and understanding of ancient drama. In seeking to place Greek plays within the "scopic regime" in which they functioned my aim is to provide a kind of "visual dramaturgy" that might enhance our comprehension of ancient performance.[2] *Opsis* ("visuality" rather than the more derogatory "spectacle") was not confined to the masks, costumes, set, props, and movement bounded by the performance space but was framed by a multi-faceted panorama where dramas set in a mythological past could merge with the landscape of the present.[3] The natural and human-made landscape of Athens provided a visually dynamic setting for the performance of drama and the sights encountered by the bodily eye of the spectator together with the memorized images contained in their mind's eye greatly affected the meaning of the play being watched.

It is well known that the Greeks called their dramatic playing spaces *theatra*—"seeing places"—and attended performances as *theatai*—"spectators,"

1 The term "Theatre of Dionysos" is not found at all in fifth or fourth centuries except in Thucydides (8.93.1) where there is mention of a "*theatron* of Dionysos," but this is at Munychia, a hill in the Piraeus, not the Acropolis in Athens. *Theatron* can mean any seating area not necessarily a theatre space. Aristophanes uses the phrase "before the *theatron*" (πρὸς τὸ θέατρον) during the parabasis where the chorus leader directly addresses the spectators (*Acharnians* 628–629, *Peace* 733–734 and *Knights* 508). The *theatron* in the fifth century was wooden and perhaps semi-temporary. See Csapo (2007) and Moretti (2000).

2 The film theorist Christian Metz (1982) 61, first coined the term "scopic regime" to create a distinction between the theatre and the cinema. Since then the phrase has come to be broadly applied to cultural specific genres of visual culture such as scopic regimes of gender, class, photography and documentary film to examine the cultural underpinnings that operate in the presentation of and comprehension of images.

3 See Zeitlin (1994) 145.

but it should be stated at the outset that although I do believe that visuality was an essential part of ancient drama and one that has often been neglected, it operated in tandem with the aural elements of a play—the music, lyrics and words. Greek drama was not mime. Words delivered in the form of live utterances existing in the moment they are spoken or sung in the ears of the audience were as important as a tilt of the masked head, a gesture of the hand or the steps of a dance. In fact the Greek theatrical experience needed both the aural and the visual to be complete—but there has been much already written about the words of Greek drama and this brief study is an attempt to balance the scales a little by focusing on the *visual*.

The key to understanding the importance of this "topographical *opsis*" lies in Greek drama's close connections to the presentation of performative collective movement such as processions, street revels, parades, dance and choral performance (what I term "symporeusis"[4]) and how they interacted with the landscape they moved through. Symporeutic performance forms had a great deal of influence on fifth-century theatre, the space it was performed in and the nature of the relationship of the visual field available to the spectator. The example we will examine in detail is Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, and how the brand-new colossal bronze statue of Athena by Phidias erected on the Acropolis in the late 460's / early 450's BCE had a powerful bearing on the structure and reception of the *Oresteia*. Thus, when Aeschylus brings his Orestes to Athena's statue in the Athens of *Eumenides* and then has the goddess appear on stage, he is forging a relationship with his spectators' immediate visual environment and creating a vivid political and social connection between the mythological world of the play and actual events existing in the here and now of the spectators. The Bronze Athena was the first monument to be erected on the ruined Acropolis, more than 20 years after the Persian destruction and at the time of the *Oresteia*'s performance had either just been completed or was in the final stages. According to Pausanias it stood so tall that it could be seen from Cape Sounion some 30 miles away.[5] This great *agalma* ("adornment") may well have been one of the first major public works undertaken by the new radical democracy and stood as a symbol of Athenian defiance in the face of Persian aggression and Spartan dominance and as a bold new expression of Athenian cultural hegemony.

The spectators at the *theatron* at the Sanctuary of Dionysos Eleuthereus, whether members of the Athenian *demos* or foreign visitors, were engaged

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4 Alan Sommerstein suggested this term to me.

5 Pausanias 1.28.2.

in a bi-modal form of spectatorship where their vision constantly oscillated between a foveal (focused) view of the action of the play before them and a peripheral view of the sights of the environment they were surrounded by.[6] Rush Rehm has vividly described the field of vision available to the spectator seated in the *theatron* who could look out at the temple and sanctuary of Dionysos, the city walls and southern gates, several important cult sites and sanctuaries, the old city of Athens to the south, the farms and roads of the Attic hills, all the way to the sea.[7] Similarly, Martin Revermann notes the importance of the "environmental proxemics of the theatre which allow for a whole range of spatial responses and interactions with its immediate surroundings."[8]

Paul Woodruff calls theatre "the art of watching and being watched," and we could apply this to many facets of Athenian society where the idea of being *visible* was central to the citizen's dual role as member of a polis and a worshipper of the gods.[9] In this respect, Greek drama shares a good deal of the same performative aspects as *theoria* ("spectacle festivals") that provided the form for many rituals, religious services and competitive events in the Greek world. Spectatorship in a *theoric* context was placed on the same level as the act of performing or competing in an athletic event by Isocrates, who wrote: "both sides (spectator and competitor) have the opportunity for pursuit of honorable ambition, the ones when they look at the athletes toiling on their behalf, the others when they reflect that everyone has come to gaze at them, the fact of spectatorship being an honor in itself."[10] The *theoria* provided a spectacle for those visiting a religious festival or shrine and this in turn was thought to please the viewing god. Thus, the more splendid the event, and the more participants and spectators involved, the more the god would take delight.

The Greeks had a notion of vision that was radically different from ours, placing sight in the same sensory category as touch.[11] To look was to feel, and to

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6 For a description of the way in which peripheral and foveal vision operate when viewing artworks see Livingstone (2002) 69–71. The mask helped guide foveal vision in the open-air environment of the ancient stage and the chorus, far from dropping out of sight between their odes, contributed a further level of visual emotional engagement by constantly listening, reacting and moving in the peripheral vision of the spectator.

7 See Rehm (2002) 35.

8 See Revermann (2006a) 113.

9 See Woodruff (2008) 31–48.

10 *Panegyricus* (iv.44–45) cited in Goldhill (2000b) 167.

11 On extramssive vision, see Lindberg (1976) 215 and Wade (1998) 11–13; Plato, *Timaeus* 45b–d, *Republic* 6. 507d–508c and *Theaetus* 156d–e. Though Aristotle (*On the Senses*, 2. 438a–

be looked at was akin to being touched. In this context vision could never be passive, but instead, was a reciprocal act and this attitude had a great bearing on the way visual information was conveyed in the Greek theatre. Spectators did not watch in a darkened room, as most modern theater-goers do, being guided to look at where a director chooses to focus their view; instead, they assembled in the open-air where they could see the reactions of their fellow spectators, contemplate the stunning views of their city and countryside and gaze on the masked actors that effectively provoked intense individuated emotional responses. The actors were also involved in this reciprocal visual process by placing their masks "before the gaze" (*prosopon*—"face," also the term for "mask")[12] of the spectators—the mask was gazed *on* and also gazed *out*.[13] This idea of extramissive vision is pithily summed up by Ruth Padel—"Eyes ex-press. Something in comes out."[14]

Athenian tragedy has a close relationship to the visual performative devices inherent in other forms of Greek ritual and theoric activity, which were usually presented by some form of symporeusis. Public dances, processions, sacrificial parades and street-reveling all helped ritualize the space they travelled through and provided a cultural basis for Greek drama's close relationship between narrative and environment. Processional and movement performance forms such as the *komos* were an essential part of Greek festival culture, creating both a dynamic visual display and providing large-scale collective participation. Thus, symporeusis had a profound effect on ancient drama and its influence can be discerned in many interrelated areas, such as the festival environment that drama was placed in, the theatrical use of the chorus, the location and architecture of the theatre, and much

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438b) rejected the prevailing concept of extramissive vision where sight was thought to be facilitated via rays emitting from the eyes, he begins *Metaphysics* (1.980a) extolling Sight, as the most loved of all the senses and the one that "most of all, makes us know."

12 The earliest occurrence of the term applied to a mask seems to be the word πρόσωπ[ον] (though it was restored at a later date) found on an Attic inscription dated to 434/3 (*IG* 1³ 343.7.) This may relate to the use of a mask in ritual practice. By the mid fourth century BCE we find πρόσωπον also applied to the mask in Aristotle's' *Poetics* (1449a35), referring to the disfigured features of the comic mask.

13 Evidence for the tragic mask in fifth century vase painting and relief sculpture indicates that the eye-holes were filled in with sclerae (whites) with a small hole that represented the pupil that the wearer looked out of. Therefore the frontal gaze direction of the mask out to the spectators was very important in facilitating emotional engagement. See figs 1.1–1.9 in Csapo (2010) 1–31. The mask was able to display an astounding variety of emotional states and was not at all an unchanging visage. I have addressed this quality of the mask in detail in Meineck (2011).

14 Padel (1992) 60.

of the narrative content of the plays themselves. Of course, the various festivals of Dionysos were begun by processions with the great parade of the City Dionysia, regarded as second only in scale to the Panathenaea and culminating at the Sanctuary of Dionysos Eleuthereus. This area was probably deliberately established as a viewing place for sacrificial offerings and stationary performances to a large spectatorship sometime in the mid sixth-century BCE.[15]

The centrality of the procession to Athenian drama is found within the fourth century "law of Euegoros," cited by Demosthenes, that afforded debtors amnesty from prosecution during various sacred festivals:

> Euegoros moved: whenever there is the procession for Dionysos in Piraeus and comedy and tragedy, whenever there is a procession at the Lenaion and tragedy and comedy, whenever there is at the City Dionysia the procession and the boys' ⟨dithyramb⟩ and the *komos* and comedy and tragedy, and whenever there is a procession at the Thargelia. It shall not be permitted to take security or to arrest another, not even those past-due their payments during these days. (Demosthenes *Against Meidias* 10, tr. adapted from Csapo and Slater)[16]

It is notable that these three festivals to Dionysos and one to Apollo (the Thargelia) are described in terms of the *pompe* (procession) and although tragedy and comedy are referenced, it is the procession that stands out as the central descriptive element for these performing-arts festivals. The relationship of a procession to the space it moves through links the visual display to its environment ritualizing the city streets and visiting locations of religious and civic significance to imbue it with additional power.[17] Thus, topography, myth, worship and performance come together in the creation of a performance that, according to Barbara Kowalzig "transcends real (historical) time by postulating a physical or local continuity of religious place."[18] A sense of sacredness and age-old practice is thus created by attaching myths to certain visible physical locations and local customary practices and frequently enacted by means of performance. We can see this in action at the end of the *Oresteia* where Aeschylus creates a new

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15 On the route of the procession of the City Dionysia see Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) 67–99. See also Parker (2005) 290–326.

16 Csapo and Slater (1994) 112.

17 Kavoulaki (1999).

18 Kowalzig (2007) 24–32. See also Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) 22–25, where she describes the perceptual frame of Greek drama as "zooming" between the mythic past and contemporary religious practices. Revermann (2006a) 111–115 applies the Bakhtinian concept of chronotopes to Greek drama and proposes that tragedy favors "closed, fixed and linear" chronotopes while comedy is more "open, fluid and discontinuous" (111).

aetiology for the Areopagus council, marking its recent political and social role in real Athenian society with an ancient foundation myth linked to an actual physical location—in this case Ares' Rock in Athens just a few hundred feet to the west of the Sanctuary of Dionsyos where the play was presented.

In addition to the processions staged by a city, the journeys the traveling *theoroi* ("viewers")[19] undertook were frequently in the form of a procession and the cult sites they visited, such as Delphi, Olympia, Dodona and Isthmia, were organized with the movement of the procession in mind.[20] This is vividly displayed in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, where the Pythia describes the arrival of Apollo in *theoric* terms and pictures the god traveling from Delos (famous for its Ionic *theoria*), to Athens and then being escorted to Delphi by a retinue of Athenians in a sacred procession that is imagined as "building" the roads and "clearing" his way (11–17). Even when a state-sanctioned *theoria* was not being performed, the sanctuary itself offered the visitor a plethora of images for personal sacred viewing via the visual display of statuary, architectural detail, wall paintings, offerings and monuments. This focus on the sanctuary as a place of ritual movement can be found in the writings of Pausanias who describes the sites he visits in such terms, his own topographical narrative echoing the processional movement of the *theoric* rituals that were held there.[21] Thus, in Euripides' *Ion* (205–218) the Chorus of Athenian women visiting Delphi gaze on the sculpture and architectural details, compare them to the Acropolis in Athens and demonstrate their knowledge of the mythological scenes on display.

While certain Athenians, usually from the upper echelons of society, took part in state-sponsored *theoria* to important pan-Hellenic shrines such as Delphi, the polis itself developed theoric festivals designed to imbue a sense of civic identity and connect the city of Athens with the surrounding cult sites of Attica.[22] Within the city, processions provided the visual context for a large number of cult activities throughout the year and it would certainly not be a stretch to maintain that the dominant performance form of fifth

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19 Rutherford (1998) 131–156 prefers the terms "pilgrim," but Scullion (2005) 111–130 objects to the religious connotations of the term.

20 Rhodes (1995) 42–65 has shown how the classical Acropolis that was rebuilt in the second half of the fifth century conformed to an architectural scheme and spatial plan that reflected the needs of the procession, what he has termed "processional architecture."

21 See Elsner (2000) 52–58, who plots Pausanias' description of the sanctuary of Zeus at Olympia in terms of the rituals practiced by the Elians.

22 On this aspect of *theoria* see Dillon (1997) 144–148; Kowalzig (2005); Nightingale (2004) 40–71.

century Athens was the procession.[23] The parade at the City Dionysia also included foreign visitors in the total participatory experience and for them a visit to the City Dionysia was certainly a theoric expedition. An inscription relating to the foundation of a colony at Brea from 446/5 BCE orders the allied states to bring a cow and panoply of armor to the Panathenaea (presumably as a sacrificial offering and dedication) and a phallus for the Dionysia. This strongly implies these foreign representatives actually participated in the Dionysian procession itself.[24] Additionally, according to Isocrates, during the second half of the fifth century the annual tribute collected from the allies may have been paraded in the Sanctuary of Dionysos before the *theatron*.[25] In *Clouds*, Aristophanes offers us a glimpse of what deities looking from above made of all this visual activity. Here the clouds are imagined gazing down on a city where great temples, splendid statues, and sacred sites are teeming with holy initiates, sacred processions, sacrifices, choral songs and dances. Athens observed from the heavens is a city of ritual performance and works of art that visually honor the gods, and the ode itself concludes by focusing on the very festival the spectators of this play are attending—the City Dionysia.[26]

> On to Athens, maidens bearing rain
> The hallowed land of Cecrops' race,
> Full of the bravest men
> Where the initiates seek to attain
> Acceptance to a sacred place.
> The house of Mysteries for holy rites.
> Where the heavenly gods gave
> Massive temples with statues grand
> And godly processions to sacred sites
> The splendid sacrifices that crown the land.
> Celebrations held throughout the year
> Then sweet Dionysos comes in spring.
> And the resonant tone of the pipes we hear
> As the joyous chorus dance and sing. (Aristophanes *Clouds*, 299–313)

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[23] Burkert (1985) 99. Parker (2005) 456–487 lists thirty-nine known processional annual festivals in Athens.

[24] *IG* 1[3] 46.11–13. 446/5.

[25] Isocrates *On The Peace* 82. See Goldhill (1999) 8–9. For a detailed analysis of Goldhill's sources see Rhodes (2003) 104–119. See also Griffin (1998) 39–61; Osborne (2004); Sommerstein (1997). For a solid argument against Goldhill's view of what he terms "pre-play" ceremonies see Carter (2007) 35–43.

[26] The reference is to festivals of Dionysos held in the spring and so it could imply the Rural Dionysia, Anthesteria or the Lenaea except that Clouds placed third at the City Dionysia in 423 BCE. The text we have seems to be a later revision possibly made sometime between 419–417 BCE and perhaps never performed. See Storey in Meineck (1998b) 401–405. See also Sommerstein (2009) 176–191.

The culmination of the great procession of the City Dionysia was the Sanctuary of Dionysos Eleuthereus and the *theatron* that was erected to receive those who came to observe the sacrifices and performances in honor of the god. Early festivals to Dionysos likely revolved around participation in a procession which would halt at key points in the city and present choral performances to processional participants who gathered to watch.[27] As the festival increased in size, so viewing stands were erected to accommodate the growing numbers who wanted to spectate, initially in the flat open ground of the Agora. Around 540–530 BCE, on the southeast slope of the Acropolis, the first temple of Dionysos was built and remains of a retaining wall that marked off a large terrace directly above have also been dated to this time.[28] This may well indicate that the Sanctuary of Dionysos Eleuthereus was founded at this time before a natural slope in the Acropolis rock, forming a *theatron* or "viewing area". This date coincides with the aims of Pisistratus to create pan-Attic festivals to tie Attica together within a centralized Athens.[29] Then around 500 the *theatron* seems to have been expanded, perhaps to accommodate more citizen spectators as a result of the reforms of Cleisthenes, which further increased participation in the festival.[30] The fifth-century festival retained its procession and placed the performances and culminating sacrifices in a stationary location where large numbers could attend. The spatial dynamics of this performance space strongly reflected the influence of symporeusis and was essentially an open "movement space" for the presentation of choral drama flowing in and out of two *eisodoi* (side roads).[31]

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27 The performance theorist Richard Schechner describes early performance forms as "natural theatre" and divides this into two broad categories: "eruptions" and "processions." An "eruption" is a static event that unfolds in one location where a crowd gathers to watch, whereas a procession has a predetermined route and a fixed, final goal. It follows an organized structure and a commonly understood form. Hence, the visual displays inherent in the procession are important in communicating identity, status and power. Schechner describes how the procession has a tendency to make several stops along its route where associated stationary performances take place. These are processional "eruptions" and spectators can gather to watch, participate and/or continue to follow the procession to its ultimate goal. See Schechner (1988) 153–186.

28 See Moretti (2000) and Goette (2007).

29 Sourvinou-Inwood (1994) and (2003) 100–104. Parker (1996) 92–93 and Connor (1990) propose a later date around 500 BCE.

30 Pritchard (2004) 208–228.

31 See Noy (2002) who makes a useful comparison between the movement dynamics of the Greek theatre and the Japanese Noh stage. Also Revermann (2006a) 52–53 & 134–135. Entrances from the *skēnē* doorway added another dimension to the Greek stage, forcing the focus of the

This theatre in the fifth-century never resembled the monumental stone edifices such as the Theatre at Epidauros or the remains of the Hellenistic Theatre of Dionysos that can be seen today. These spaces, with their curvilinear orchestras, tiers of stone seats and vast seating areas have become the visual paradigm of what a Greek theatre was supposed to look like and have exerted an enormous influence over generations of scholars, many of whom are still searching for the aesthetic harmony of a circular playing area, a sense of monumentality and a vast audience seated across from each other. These are powerfully ingrained images of the Greek theatre but the reality of the available evidence points to a much smaller, wooden, predominantly frontal, temporary space with an irregular rectilinear orchestra that reflected the natural topography of the Acropolis, where every cave, fissure, spring and natural element held powerful aetiological meaning, rather than any notions of architectural aesthetics. Like the symporeutic performances it grew out of, this theatre space placed its spectators within an existing environment. It did not erect a new artificial one around them.[32] The latest archaeological field

spectators on sudden and often surprising entrances. With an entrance from an *eisodos* the line between "on" and "off" was always ambiguous and fluid. See Taplin (1983) 157–158.

32 Those who have advanced the theory of a rectilinear *orchestra* include, Anti (1947); Gebhard (1974) 428–440; Pöhlmann (1981) 129–146; Moretti (2000); Goette (2007). For surveys of the history of the scholarship concerning the archaeology of the Theatre of Dionysos see Scullion (1994) 3–66 and Ashby (1988) 1–20. Bosher (2006) 151–160, tables 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3, has recently surveyed theatre remains in Greece and of eight known fifth-century spaces (Aixone, Argos, Athens, Chaeronea, Ikaria, Thorikos, Trachones and Sparta), only one is known to be circular and that is the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia at Sparta, which may have had another function in cult than the performance of drama. Scullion (1994) 38–41 objects to a rectilinear orchestra on the grounds that the natural bowl shape of the cavea would favor a circular form and make straight rows of seats nonsensical. However the cavea of the south east Acropolis slope is not as acute a curve as Scullion proposes, as can be seen in the plan by Dimitris Tsalkanis (http://www.ancientathens3d.com/katathmeg.JPG) and on the model of the Acropolis in the Acropolis Museum in Athens showing the southern slope as it may have appeared in 480 BCE by M. Korres and P. Demetriades. A good photo of this model can be seen in Vlassopoulou (2004) 3, fig. 1. Wiles (1997) 63–86, has been a passionate advocate of a circular orchestra suggesting that the center of that space was the strongest point on stage. Yet this theory neglects the fact that the *skēnē* was almost certainly established on the center far edge of the playing space, which would have "upstaged" any events presented in the center of the orchestra. Where the *skēnē* was located was the focal point of the space and it is not coincidental that this was where the stage developed in later Hellenistic theatres. Wiles objects to the entire premise of a rectilinear orchestra that he describes as a "frontal, confrontational space" (52) and prefers to advocate the idea of a "collective self-awareness" among the spectators as citizens gazed at each other across a circular playing space. The problem with this attractive social theory is the fact that masked theatre demands visual and acoustic frontal engagement (Meineck 2011). Wiles builds his assumption of a circular orchestra on the premise that the dithyrambic *kuklios choros* proves that the orchestra must

work at the site suggests that the although a major renovation was begun in the 440's, with stone front seats and structural elements to support the stage building and machinery, the *theatron* remained a wooden structure. Recently, wood grain imprints from fifth century post-holes have been found in the soil, suggesting that this wooden structure was permanent, or at least the superstructure for the wooden benches (*ikria*) was, and rectilinear.[33]

To demonstrate this significance of the visual environment to the original spectator's experience of tragedy we turn to the question of the colossal bronze statue of Athena on the Acropolis and the relationship of this important visual symbol to Aeschylus' *Oresteia* of 458 BCE, the impact of which has not been discussed before. We can assume that at the time the trilogy was staged any visitor to Athens from Attica or abroad must have been struck by the destruction wrought by the invading Persians in 480 and 479 BCE on the sacred buildings on the Acropolis, clearly visible from all over Athens and certainly during the procession of the City Dionysia or as the attendees walked along the Street of Tripods to enter the Sanctuary from the East. Apart from some clearing of debris and the shoring up of a retaining wall, the Acropolis had been largely left untouched despite the rapidity with which the Athenians had rebuilt their homes and civic buildings.[34] For nearly 20 years, it was left as a ruin, a physical reminder of the ravages of the Persian destruction and a deep scar on the landscape of the city of Athens. With this in mind, Paul Cartledge imagines the spectators attending the production of Aeschylus' *Persians* in 472 glancing backwards at the sight of the actual destruction and registering the "potent political message."[35] Thus, as Argyro Loukaki has written, "ruins are partly social constructions because they depend on social will for their perpetuation."[36] So, when the Parthenon was begun in the mid-fifth century it was deliberately situated to the south of the old ruined temple

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have been circular. Not so. Simply watch any circular dance performed in Greece today, most of them take place in the town *square*. In my own work I have previously agreed with Mastronarde (1990) 248 n. 3, "If the Theater of Dionysus had operated for generations with a rectangular orchestra, why was a circular orchestra introduced?" See Meineck (2009a) 174–175; (2009b) 351–352 and Meineck and Woodruff (2003) xii–xiv. I now feel that in the light of recent interpretations of the available archaeological evidence we must not automatically assume there was ever a circular orchestra in the fifth century. For the temporary nature of the wooden seating (*ikria*) see Csapo (2007). On the capacity of the *theatron* see Csapo (2007) 97–98, who places it at between 4,000 and 7,000.

33 See Papastamati-von Moock (forthcoming) and Meineck (2012).

34 See Thompson (1981) 343–345.

35 See Cartledge (1997) 19.

36 See Loukaki (2008) 16.

of Athena Polias, leaving the original footprint of the building undisturbed. Likewise, the Erectheion was located to the north, lining up with the old temple's foundations, with the famous Caryatid porch looking out over the remains. Surely, the sight of the vast empty space where the old temple once stood must have been a profound one for ancient visitors to the Acropolis.[37] Additionally, spectators looking from below would have seen the column drums and fragments of the entablature from the unfinished Older Parthenon (begun in 489 BCE) set into the north wall (and still visible today). Therefore, by leaving the Acropolis in ruins, the Athenians created a visual memorial to the evacuation and destruction of Athens, a deeply traumatic event that affected every Athenian regardless of class or social status and what Gloria Ferrari has described as "a choreography of ruins."[38]

There has been much debate as to why it took the Athenians so long to develop a comprehensive building program for the Acropolis. This may have been because of financial constraints, the distraction of having to rebuild homes and government structures, or the energy of the state being focused on external campaigns and building the long walls linking Athens with its harbor at Piraeus. However, though it was once regarded as a fabrication, the Oath of Plataea, said to have been sworn by the Greeks before the battle of Plataea in 479 BCE, has recently regained credibility as a possible reason for the delay in rebuilding the Acropolis and leaving it as a highly visible ruin. Consider in particular, the final clause of the oath as reported by Diodorus:

> I will not rebuild any temple that has been burnt and destroyed, but I will let them be, and leave them as a memorial of the sacrilege of the barbarian.[39]

The literary evidence for the Oath is late and the clause concerning the temples does not appear in the related epigraphic record from the fourth century.[40] However, the archaeological evidence does seem to suggest that from 479 BCE to the mid-fifth century no major rebuilding of any Athenian cult site took place. Yet sometime between 460 and 455 BCE one of the most visible monuments in all of Athens was erected on the Acropolis—a colossal bronze statue of Athena sculpted by Phidias and standing 30–50 feet tall.

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[37] See Gerding (2006) who has argued that the area was left clear to provide space for the Panathenaea procession.

[38] See Ferrari (2002) 11–35.

[39] Diodorus 11.29.3, translated by Meiggs (1972) 504.

[40] Isocrates. *Panegyricus* 156; Cicero *De Rep*. III.15; Pausanias 10.35.2, and Plutarch *Pericles* 17. For the epigraphic evidence see Krentz (2007) 731–742. For discussion on the existence of an Oath of Plataea see Mark (1993) 98–104 and Rhodes and Osborne (2003) 440–448.

Pausanias reports that the spear tip and helmet of the Bronze Athena could be seen 30 miles away by sailors rounding Cape Sounion and heading into port and that the statue was financed by the spoils from Marathon.[41] Demosthenes wrote that the statue was paid for by the Greeks in recognition of Athenian valor in the face of the Persians and was named "Athena Promachos"—implying a warlike stance with thrusting spear.[42] However, she seems to have been depicted standing with an upright spear and holding a shield at her leg, not in the more aggressive pose usually associated with the "Promachos" type.[43] This huge bronze Athena dominated the Athenian skyline for perhaps 700 years, until she was taken to Constantinople, where she may have stood mounted on a pillar in the Forum of Constantine. An inscription dating to 455–450 BCE lists the costs of the statue including the workforce, materials and wages for the public officials in charge.[44] This act of public accountability is characteristic of a project undertaken by the state as an instrument of the democracy rather than a personal, aristocratic monument meant to glorify an individual or family. It has been estimated that the total cost was the substantial sum of 83 talents and that it took nine years to cast and erect.[45] Thus, the nature of this public inscription combined with the inference that the erection of the statue may have been perceived by Sparta as an affront to the spirit of the Oath of Plataea seems strongly to indicate the work of a newly emboldened democracy keen to assert its civic and military pride.

The Bronze Athena stood across from the entrance to the Acropolis in front of the earliest extant remains, the ancient Mycenaean retaining wall. She was positioned on an axis with the old destroyed temple of Athena Polias and looked to the west—in the direction of the naval victory at Salamis. Even after the building of the Parthenon, Erectheion and Temple of Athena Nike, the statue still dominated the Acropolis skyline and the Propylaea was built to line up with her so that the first sight encountered when entering the site was the colossal Athena.[46] Furthermore, she would have been visible from all over the city of Athens, her burnished bronze shining brightly on sunny days. Perhaps Sophocles had her in mind when the chorus of Salaminian sailors in

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41 Pausanias 1.28.2.

42 Demosthenes *On the False Embassy* 272, and the scholiast on Demosthenes, *Against Androtion* 13 (597.56).

43 On the evidence for the appearance of the bronze Athena see Hurwit (2004) 79–84; Pollitt (1996) 28–34; Lundgreen (1997) 190–197; and Mattusch (1988) 168–172.

44 *IG* I^3 435.

45 Dinsmoor (1921) 118–129. Hurwit (2004) 80–81 makes the suggestion that the statue may have been ordered by Kimon to commemorate his victory at the Eurymedon ca. 470–466 BCE.

46 For a possible reconstruction of the Bronze Athena see Hurwit (2004) 63, fig. 56.

Ajax imagine themselves rounding Cape Sounion and haling Athens (1219–1221). The Bronze Athena of Phidias was in every sense a true *agalma*—a brilliant adornment, aptly described by Jeffrey Hurwit as "an early classical Statue of Liberty,"[47] and it was erected at a time of great political and social upheaval in Athens. The domestic political ramifications of the *Oresteia*, with its references to the tension between the new democratic government and the Kimonian faction are, by now, very well known,[48] additionally, in the spring of 458 BCE, the Athenians were in conflict with Corinth, Aegina and Epidaurus, three of the most important Spartan allies, and had recently made an alliance of their own with Argos against Spartan aggression.[49] If the Oath of Plataea had indeed been a real event binding Athens and Sparta together, at least superficially, then the erection of this statue may well have been observed as a very visible breach. In any event, just a few short months after the performance of the *Oresteia* 14,000 Athenians faced a Spartan army in direct conflict at the battle of Tanagra.[50]

In the *Eumenides*, Aeschylus conflates the symbolism of the Athenian past with the imagery of the new democratic present by placing one of the most sacred Athenian icons, the small ancient wooden idol (*bretas*) of Athena, in a dynamic visual relationship to the colossal brand-new statue standing on the Acropolis. At *Eumenides* 80, Apollo tells Orestes to "come to the city of Pallas and sit clasping her ancient image in your arms."[51] This was the ancient *xoanon* (crude wooden idol) or *bretas* (small statue) of Athena Polias ("of the city"), reported by Pausanias to have been of great age and to have fallen from the sky.[52] The *bretas* has been described by John Kroll as "a protective talisman of the city" and was reportedly taken to Troezen aboard a ship when the Athenians evacuated.[53] Unfortunately, there is little consensus as to exactly what this statue actually looked like, although Tertullian writing around 197 CE described it as "a rough stock without form and the merest rudiment of a statue of unformed wood."[54] Other than that we know very

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47 Hurwit (1999) 151.

48 Podlecki (1966b); Bowie (1993b); Griffith (1995); Goldhill (2000).

49 See Kennedy (2006) 35–72.

50 See Kagan (1969) 84–95 and Samons (1999) 221–233.

51 All translations from *Eumenides* are from Sommerstein (2008a) unless otherwise indicated.

52 Pausanias 1.26.6.

53 Kroll (1982) 65. Plutarch *Themistocles* 10.

54 Tertullian *Ad nationes* 1.12.13. See also the supposed comments of Aeschylus cited by Porphyry (*On Abstinence* 2.18) on the virtues of archaic, crude idols relating to poetry. See Sommerstein (2002) 160.

little of its appearance though there is epigraphic evidence from the late 370s BCE listing ornaments that the idol wore, including: a diadem, earrings, a neck band, five necklaces, a golden owl, a golden *aegis* with *gorgoneion* and a gold *phiale* (libation bowl) that she held in her hand.[55] In addition to these accoutrements, the Athena Polias was dressed in a highly ornamental saffron-colored *peplos* embroidered in purple with images of the mythic battle between the gods and giants that was delivered at the end of the Panathenaic procession. It may well be this *peplos* that is depicted at the culmination of the Parthenon Frieze.[56] The idol was housed in the Temple of Athena Polias, before it was evacuated in 480 BCE in advance of the Persian destruction. The knowledge that it was paraded at the Panathenaea festival combined with representations of other *xoanon*-type idols suggests a statue of no more than a few feet in height.[57]

The term *bretas* occurs seven times in the course of the *Eumenides* making it clear that Aeschylus intended his spectators to imagine the statue of Athena Polias.[58] Yet, it is not known where the statue was housed after 479 BCE until the completion of the Erectheion in 406 BCE. Gloria Ferrari has suggested that the charred and ruined *cella* of the old Temple of Athena Polias may have remained standing after the Persian destruction and been bolstered to receive the *bretas* on its return from Troezen or Salamis.[59] Wherever the *bretas* was housed the presence of the brand-new and highly visible statue of the Bronze Athena at the gateway to the Acropolis would strongly suggest that Athena was now to be envisioned as maintaining a vigilant and defensive gaze over both shrine and city. Whereas the *bretas* was placed out of public sight for much of the time, the Bronze Athena was on display as a sentinel for all to see. This exact sentiment is reflected at *Eumenides* 920 where Athena is described as τε φρούριον θεῶν νέμει,/ῥυσίβωμον ῾Ελλά-/νων ἄγαλμα δαιμόνων— "the guard-post of the gods,/the protector of their altars, the delight (*agalma*) of the divinities of Greece." Thus, the age-old continuity of the ancient idol that had to be removed from the city in 480 BCE can be contrasted with the

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55 *IG* II^2 cited by Kroll (1982) 68 n. 18. For the various opinions on the appearance of Athena Polias see Hurwit (2004) 17; Steiner (2001) 91; Robertson (1996) 46–47; Donohue (1988) 143–144; Kroll (1982); Herington (1955).

56 See Hurwit (2004) 147, fig. 107.

57 Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) 98–100. There is an image of a small *bretas* on south metope 21 of the Acropolis and Hurwit has suggested that it could be a representation of Athena Polias. Hurwit (2004), 17 & fig. 19.

58 Aeschylus *Eumenides*; 80; 242; 259; 409; 430; 446 and 1024.

59 See Ferrari (2002) 11–35. For discussion on the existence of what has been called the *opisthodomos* see Hurwit (2005) 24–25; Hurwit (2004) 76–78; and Linders (2007) 777.

immovable permanence of the new colossal bronze statue that might stand against the kind of devastation of sacred shrines and idols suffered at the hands of the Persians.

> When they came to the land of Greece, they did not scruple to plunder the images of the gods and set fire to temples: altars have vanished, and the abodes of deities have been ruined, uprooted, wrenched from their foundations.
> Aeschylus, *Persians* 808–817 (translation, Alan Sommerstein)

We cannot be certain if Aeschylus used a prop statue of Athena Polias in *Eumenides*, or intended his audience to imagine the *bretas* and staged *Orestes* at the foot of an altar or statue base. Indeed the frequent textual references may indicate that it was not physically depicted. We should remember that at the end of *Libation Bearers*, Orestes states that he sees the Furies, which were probably imaginary. There are several examples of characters in Greek tragedy describing physical objects and scenes that were not staged. Notable among them is the chorus of Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* (164–302), who describe the Greek fleet assembled to sail on Troy and the major Greek heroes, and the chorus of Euripides' *Ion* who vividly describe the sights of Delphi (184–218). There is also much dispute about whether prop statues were used in Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, *Seven Against Thebes* and *Agamemnon* (519–520).[60] In the representational conditions established by a theatre of the mask we must not assume that something appears on stage simply because it is mentioned in the text. Likewise, we should not assume that the text alone indicates everything that was shown on stage.

Aeschylus does produce Athena on stage at *Eu.* 397 as a speaking character in the play and this representation clearly resembles the new bronze statue of Phidias. Here, Athena describes herself as having "rapid and unwearied foot" and "flapping the folds of my aegis" from the shores of Scamander in the Troas, where she says she has claimed new territories for the Greeks.[61] This is not the embodiment of the small sacred idol spirited to safety from the Persian invaders in 480 BCE, but a confident, martial Athena coming from battle and describing herself in vigorous motion. Deborah Steiner has shown how artists, poets and historians "blur the lines between the actions of gods and their representations" and fuse deity and cult image through

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60 Taplin (1977b) 377; Sommerstein (1989) 123–124; Ewans (1995) 201; and Rehm (2002) 91, all envision a prop statue. Wiles (1997) 195–200, has pointed out the importance of statues in Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, and *Seven Against Thebes*. See Meineck (1998a) 12.

61 There were recent Athenian engagements at Abydos, Sestos and Byzantium. See Kennedy (2006) 35–72, and Sommerstein (2008) 404–405, n. 101.

a sense of their mobility. For example, Herodotus relates how the idols of Damia and Auxesia fell to their knees rather than allow the Athenians to remove them from their sanctuary on Aegina (5.86.3).[62] This amalgamation of inanimate statue with animate deity is reflected in *Eumenides* by Athena's sweeping, movement-filled entrance coming immediately after the Erinyes have sung and danced the "binding song." This incantation roots Orestes in place and stands in marked contrast to the stress on the rapid mobility and freedom of movement of Athena when she enters.[63] Additionally, Aeschylus emphasizes this fusion of statue and deity by developing the way in which Orestes addresses Athena: at 235–243 Orestes speaks to the *bretas* as if the idol was the goddess; then at 287–298 he calls to a far-off Athena, hailing her to come to his aid and once Athena arrives he addresses her directly (443–469).

As for Athena's physical appearance in *Eumenides*, Alan Sommerstein has written, "it is likely that she [Athena] appears as the warrior goddess, in gleaming bronze armour" and, "the very brightness of her armour would make an effective contrast with the dark garments of the Erinyes."[64] Therefore, the sight of the on-stage Athena would have strongly evoked the brand-new gleaming statue (*agalma*) of a fully armed Athena standing over the Sanctuary of Dionysos on the Acropolis. The term *agalma* is connected to the verb *agallo* meaning "to take delight in" or "to make glorious" and when applied to a statue it implies something that is clearly meant to be seen and admired as opposed to the *bretas*, which existed within a tradition of mediated viewership. Such idols were usually displayed at key festive moments to invigorate the god's presence in the community and their concealment or display took on significant meaning depending on the deity represented.[65] Like the theatrical mask, statues operated within an extramissive scopic regime in that they were both gazed upon but also gazed out. This notion of a statue of a deity actively watching was also encapsulated in the presence of the *xoanon* of Dionysos, which formed the primary visual focus of the procession at the City Dionysia and may well have also been placed in the *theatron* where it acted as a divine spectator gazing on the performances staged in the god's honor.[66] This capacity of divine

62 Steiner (2001) 157–168.

63 At *Eumenides* 297–298 Orestes appeals to Athena as "liberator" to come and free him from his troubles. After this the Erinyes sing their "binding song."

64 Sommerstein (1989) 151.

65 Vernant (1991) 151–159; Faraone (1992) 138–139; Steiner (2001) 106–109.

66 See Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 60, and Wiles (1997) 19.

statues to possess the power of sight is reflected in the mythic tradition that statues averted their eyes at the sight of a transgression. For example, in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris* the idol of Artemis turns and looks away to avoid witnessing an impiety (*IT* 1165–1167). It was also believed that the highly ornate inlaid or painted eyes of bronze, and occasionally marble, statues held both positive and negative powers.[67] We see this in *Agamemnon* where the "deities who face the sun" are implored by the messenger to "let these eyes of yours be bright" (519–520) and Menelaus is portrayed longing for Helen, clutching at phantoms and hating beautiful statues "with empty eyes / devoid of desire" (418–419).[68]

The term *agalma* is used extensively by Pausanias to describe the statues he encounters on his travels, but is found only once in the *Iliad* (4.144) where it describes a gleaming, highly valuable cheek plate for a horse. It occurs seven times in the *Odyssey* with regard to descriptions of jewelry or offerings and at 8.509 it is used to describe the Trojan horse as a *delight* for the gods.[69] In the *Oresteia*, the word occurs at moments when the value of something under view is being emphasized: when Agamemnon is wrestling with the decision to sacrifice his daughter he calls Iphigenia "the *delight* of my house" (*Ag.* 208); Helen is described as resembling "a gentle *adornment* of wealth" (*Ag.* 740); and when Electra sees a lock of hair on her father's tomb she says it gives, "*glory* to this tomb and honor to my father" (*Cho.* 200). In the *Eumenides* Aeschylus draws a distinction between the dank and dark Erinyes and the brilliance of Athena and the Olympians particularly at 55–56, where the term is used (for the first time in the *Oresteia*) to describe statues of divinities (*agalmata*), which according to the Pythia should not suffer the disgusting sight of the Erinyes.

Athena herself was often associated with the power of sight and she is variously described as *glaukopis* "silver-eyed" or "owl-eyed," *oxuderkês* "sharp-eyed" and *ophthalmitis* "eye-goddess." She wears the petrifying apotropaic *prosopôn* of Medusa on her Aegis and possesses the power to delude the sight of mortals as she does so effectively in Sophocles' *Ajax* (1–133). Yet, she is also depicted as looking kindly upon what seems hateful as at *Eumenides*

67 See Steiner (2001), 173–181, and Frontisi-Ducroux (1995).

68 The question is are these Menelaus' eyes or the eyes of the statues and are these statues carved to resemble Helen? Steiner (1995) 180 suggests that the ambiguity of the language is deliberate and this may be another example of the reciprocal gaze "to establish a dense network of relations between Helen, Menelaus and the statues." Steiner has also collected several different interpretations of this difficult passage (179, n. 26).

69 *Odyssey*, 3.274; 3.438; 4.602; 8.509; 12.347; 18.300; 19.257.

406–407 where she immediately sees the Eryines as "new visitors" and says they "amaze" her eyes. At the start of *Eumenides* the Pythia says that their very appearance is not fit to bring before a statue of the gods or under the roofs of men and that she has never before seen such a sight (55–57). In contrast, when the Eryines eventually accept Athena's offer to become the "Kindly Ones" (*Eumenides*) and reside in Athens, she looks on their "fearsome faces" and sees "great benefit coming to these citizens" (990–991).

At the resolution of the *Oresteia*, Athena offers to escort the Eumenides to their new home in the "eye of the whole land of Theseus" (1025–1026), namely, the Acropolis—still largely in ruins, apart from the brand-new Bronze Athena. The Eumenides are encouraged to offer the Athenians the fruits of the earth and plentiful flocks (907) that will "give greater fertility to those who are pious" and "cherish the race to which these righteous men belong" (909–910). They reply that they foresee "that the bright light of the sun may cause blessings, beneficial to the life of Athens, to burst forth in profusion from the earth" (923–925). These are apt pledges for a people who have been struggling to rebuild their city and help further to reinforce the *Oresteia's* status as a work that advocates political, social and urban renewal. As the chorus of Athenians rejoices at their new blessings "under the wings of Pallas" (1001), the spectators seated in the *theatron* would only need turn their heads and look up, or remember the image of the new statue of Athena towering over the Sacred Way as they had paraded the statue of Dionysos a few days before, to appreciate the significance of that line.

As well as creating a new aetiology for the Areopagus council, the *Oresteia* might also be understood as a "foundational production" that not only actively linked its themes to the current socio-political situation, but also oriented its content to the visual presence of a city at a key moment of civic renewal. By applying a "visual dramaturgy" then, perhaps we might posit a new theory about the *Oresteia*—that even more that the Parthenon, the production of the *Oresteia* under the newly completed Bronze Athena marked the moment when Athens began both materially and socially to *rebuild*.[70] As the Eumenides are led to their new mythical home within the

[70] What became of the Bronze Athena? Niketas Choniates wrote of her (if it was her) in 1204 and told how she had been installed in the Forum of Constantine after being removed from Athens. In 1203 many people, fearing the oncoming Crusaders, thought that the "pagan" deity's outstretched hand (that formerly held an owl or Nike) was beckoning to the Western armies to come and destroy their city. Convinced of the statue's maleficence an angry mob set upon her, tore her to the ground and the Bronze Athena of Pheidias was completely destroyed. See Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. van Dieten (1971) 558–559. See also Jenkins (1947) 31–33 and (1951) 72–74.

physical landscape of contemporary Athens, it is quite appropriate that in a theatre that grew from a performance tradition of collective movement and visuality, the resolution of Aeschylus' superb trilogy should be marked by a great procession.

HERACLES' COSTUME FROM EURIPIDES' *HERACLES* TO PANTOMIME PERFORMANCE*

Rosie Wyles

The significance of a performance can run far beyond the moment of its enjoyment by the original audience; it has the potential to reverberate through years, decades, and even centuries of theatre history. The more distant in time from the original performance, the quieter the reverberations and the less direct the connection perhaps. But, just as it is possible to find a literary archetype lurking beneath the surface of a much later composition, so too the original performance can be identified as the impetus for a chain of theatrical creations and conceptualisations spanning across centuries. The literary analogy, however, is not exact in this important respect: while a text deals in words, a theatrical performance combines words, visual media and stage action. The reception and influence of a production, therefore, is not limited to its text but may be expressed through any one of its performance elements. In the case of Euripides' *Heracles*, it is the status given to Heracles' costume by its first performance, c. 415 BC, which exerts an influence across centuries of theatre history.

The gaining of this status depends on the principle that the cultural significance of pieces of costume or props has the potential to be changed by theatrical performance. Sofer, in a fascinating study, has shown how props may become the iconic representative for plays and for certain moments within them. After the performance, the props retain these layers of meaning and subsequent productions must negotiate them.[1] Within ancient theatre there are some clear instances of where props seem to have become iconic in this way. Such an association could emerge through the celebrity of particular actors; so the fifth/fourth-century tragic actor Timotheus made the sword iconic for Sophocles' *Ajax*, and the urn became iconic for Sophocles' *Electra* because of the fourth-century tragic actor Polus.[2] Sometimes the dramatic

* I would like to thank Judith Mossman, Alex Gwakyaa, the anonymous reader of this volume and the editors for their comments on this chapter.

[1] Sofer (2003). I justify the adoption of this approach for ancient theatre in Wyles (2007) 7–22.

[2] The scholiast's comment on Sophocles' *Ajax* 864 reveals that Timotheus of Zacynthus

treatment of costumes or props within a play could be striking enough in itself to create iconic status for them (even without an association with actors). So, for example, in the costume-borrowing scene of Aristophanes' *Acharnians* 292–489, Telephus' rags enjoy iconic status; symbolising both Euripides' play as a whole and the specific dramatic handling of the costume in the play.[3] Aristophanes exploits the iconic status and theatrical associations which Euripides' play had created for Telephus' costume (there are hints that the rags were used in the tragedy to reflect on nature of theatre, and this scene in Aristophanes engages in similar questions, only more explicitly).[4]

It is in this context of costumes becoming iconic that the symbolic status of Heracles' costume needs to be understood: it becomes iconic for Euripides' *Heracles* in general, but even more importantly it symbolises a dramatic handling of costume which makes a statement within theatrical discourse. His costume is used to reflect on ancient theatre's dependence on costume for the construction of its stage characters. While costume, in general, offers the perfect medium through which to comment on the theatrical process, Heracles' iconic bow, lionskin, club, and bearded mask emerges as *the* costume to exploit for this purpose. While these attributes had, of course, been used to represent Heracles in art and on stage before Euripides' *Heracles*, it is the specific treatment of the costume in this tragedy which enables them to gain such an important place in theatrical discourse. A brief consideration of Euripides' handling of the same costume in his much earlier *Alcestis* highlights the significance of the later production: while in *Alcestis*, the costume receives little attention and merely functions to signal who the character is, in *Heracles*, Euripides makes it a central focus and through it, demonstrates the absolute dependence of stage characters on theatre costume.[5] The *Heracles*, therefore, makes a fundamental difference

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performed Ajax's suicide so effectively that he gained the nickname *sphageus* ('slayer'—the word used for Ajax's sword in this scene); see Stephanis (1988) no. 2416 and Easterling (1997c) 222 n. 36. The actor's fame associated this prop with Sophocles' play. Similarly, the story told by Aulus Gellius (6.5) about Polus' use of his own son's urn in a performance of Sophocles' *Electra* suggests that a comparable association was forged between this prop and its play.

3 For the costumes representing plays in this scene, see Macleod (1974).

4 Aristophanes here exploits the principle of 'theatrical ghosting', see Carlson (1994a) and (1994b). For the self-reflectiveness of Telephus' rags see Wyles (2007) 111–138 and (2011) 62–69.

5 Heracles is recognised immediately in *Alcestis* (477–478) which suggests that he is wearing his usual costume, but the costume goes otherwise unmarked in the play, L. Parker (2007) ad loc. Similarly, though Sophocles makes Heracles' attributes conspicuous by their absence in the *Trachiniae*, this does not establish the same self-reflexive symbolism for them that Euripides will.

to what the costume symbolises, since after this production it could signal not only the character's identity but also the intention to engage in theatrical self-reflection. It is in this sense that Euripides' *Heracles*, c. 415, marks a beginning for the costume since this production endowed it with the symbolic status which was exploited in theatre and culture (more generally) over the following seven hundred years.[6]

The symbolic status of Heracles' costume is set up by Euripides' handling of it in *Heracles* and then reinforced by Aristophanes' treatment of it in *Frogs*. The key symbol-forging scene for the costume in Euripides' tragedy comes after Heracles has killed his wife and children in a fit of madness. The scene shows the hero realising what he has done and facing a dilemma over how to go forward. Heracles' response to the news is to veil himself; this, in effect, imposes his 'semiotic death' on stage, since by this action and his separation from his weapons, his stage-identity is destroyed (so that Theseus even fails to recognise Heracles, 1189).[7] The resolution of the play depends on Heracles' progression from this liminal state, which is framed as a crisis in identity; he is 'dead' and can only come back to life by unveiling himself and taking up his weapons. The importance of this second action to the recovery of his identity is made explicit by Heracles' speech to his weapons (1377–1385):

> What pain, again, these weapons give me, though they have been my constant companions! I am torn—should I keep them or throw them away? They will hang at my side as I kneel and speak like this: 'With us you killed your wife and children; if you keep us you keep the killers of your sons!' Shall I then carry them in my hands? How can I justify it? But am I to strip myself of them, the weapons with which I performed the finest deeds that Greece has witnessed? Am I to submit to my enemies and die a shameful death? I must not part with them, but keep them, whatever misery they bring![8]

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6 This approach fills some of the gaps in our understanding of the cultural placement and appropriation of Heracles; offering a supplement, for example, to Rawlings and Bowden (2005).

7 The notion of 'semiotic death' is similar to the idea of 'corpsing' on stage; the laugh of an actor can destroy the conjured stage-existence of a character and the removal of key semiotic elements of costume may similarly undermine his/her fragile presence. In fact, the fundamentals of the idea can already be seen in Andromache's loss of her headdress (*Iliad* 22. 466–472), though, of course, the impact of such symbolic actions is far greater when visualised on the stage. On 'semiotic death', see Wyles (2007), 107–108. I am grateful to Vayos Liapis for the further implicit examples of such a 'semiotic death' of Heracles in Sophocles' *Trachiniae* and Xerxes in Aeschylus' *Persians*.

8 Translation Davie (2002).

Throughout the play Heracles has been defined as a conquering hero, and his lionskin, club, and bow have been the visual symbols of this identity.[9] This speech reiterates the weapons' importance to his identity and his dependence on them. Even if they have gained an unsavoury layer of meaning as representatives of familial killing, Heracles recognises that without them he will die, not only through a literal vulnerability but also because, on the theatrical level, without them he has no identity. The progression from the complete loss of identity to its final recovery, when Heracles, unveiled, chooses to retain his weapons and go on living, operates on a metatheatrical level. Heracles takes up his pieces of costume and 'becomes' himself, inviting the audience to reflect on the theatrical process of constructing stage-characters through costume. Through this dramatic handling, Euripides establishes the lionskin, club, and bow as symbols for the reliance of the tragic art (and its characters) on costume.[10]

While Euripides established the potential of Heracles' costume as a means for thinking about the nature of theatre, Aristophanes' treatment of it in *Frogs*, produced in 405 BC secured its status as the costume *par excellence* through which to think about costume's role in character-construction. In this comedy, Dionysus dresses up as Heracles in the hope that this will aid his passage to the Underworld. Before setting out, he visits Heracles to ask for some advice. The audience is offered the striking visual spectacle of Dionysus dressed in effeminate soft boots and yellow dress with lionskin on top and club in hand. As though this were not enough, he then comes face-to-face with Heracles, who wears his usual costume. The juxtaposition of the two figures is intended to be ridiculous, and its humour is given further emphasis by Heracles, who can't stop laughing at the sight of Dionysus'

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9 Wyles (2007) 157–159.

10 It seems that even before Euripides' play, Heracles had already shown his potential for this function in theatre. The fragments of Ion's *Omphale* suggest that Heracles had been dressed up on stage and this, therefore, offered implicit comment on the theatrical process; see esp. Ion fr. 22 *TrGF* 1 with Cyrino (1998) 218–219. But what makes the treatment of his costume in *Heracles* so much more significant for theatre history is the longevity of its exploitation in theatrical discourse following Euripides' play. Another significant precedent, in terms of the theatrical point explored by Euripides through the costume, is the dressing-up scene in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* 292–489. In this comedy, Dikaeopolis puts on the costume of Telephus and 'becomes' that character, an act which invites reflection on the transformative nature of theatre costume, see Muecke (1982) 21. Though the Euripidean scene is far less explicit than the Aristophanic one, both are in fact based on the same dramatic action (the adoption of costume) and through it make a similar point about the relationship between costume and identity in theatre. Familiarity with this comedy may have enabled the audience to appreciate what Euripides was up to in the *Heracles*.

strange outfit (45–47). The deeper significance of the scene, however, is the implicit comment that it offers on the theatrical use of costume and, for our purposes, the strengthening of the symbolic status that Euripides' production had established for the costume. The sight of the two figures side-by-side, one exemplifying the Heracles' costume functioning successfully to create a plausible stage character, and the other (Dionysus') showing it in a context where it fails to convince, invites reflection on how theatre costume operates and the criteria necessary to its success.

The impact of the self-reflective statement made by this visual spectacle is heightened by the signals that lead the audience to expect it. Aristophanes arranges a dramatic scenario for the opening of this comedy which should immediately signal to alert spectators that he is about to make a comment on the nature of theatre (and specifically costume). The scenario recalls two earlier Aristophanic comedies in which the comic hero, similarly seeking help, visits a tragedian, and engages in an interaction which makes an implicit comment on the nature of theatre costume; see *Acharnians* 292–489 and *Thesmophoriazusae* 39–279.[11] In *Acharnians*, Dikaeopolis visits Euripides, borrows the costume of the tragic character Telephus and dresses up in it, while in *Thesmophoriazusae*, Euripides himself will go with his relation to visit Agathon and borrows garments from him to dress up the Kinsman as a woman. The twist in *Frogs*, of course, is that Dionysus, as god of drama, has no need to borrow a costume (he has it already!) and his interaction with tragedians will be saved for later in the play. Aristophanes could, therefore, expect his experienced viewers to be alert to the game he is playing in *Frogs*, through the combination of these signals. Aristophanes' treatment of Heracles' costume, and its placement at the culmination of a series of costumes in his plays used to comment on theatre, crystallises its symbolic status in theatrical discourse.[12]

These two 5th-century productions, Euripides' *Heracles* and Aristophanes' *Frogs*, and the traces of them left in their texts, established Heracles' costume as theatrically 'good-to-think-with' and secured its cultural significance over the following centuries. There are clear indications that by the 4th century BC, Heracles had gained centre stage when it came to questions of

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11 Wyles (2011) 61–63 and 97–99.

12 Later in the *Frogs*, there will be further play with the Heraclean disguise as, on arrival to the Underworld, it is passed between Dionysus and his slave with hilarious consequences (495–497, 528, 581–589). This offers supplementary reflection on the nature of theatre costume, but the major point is made by this first visual juxtaposition between Heracles and Dionysus.

theatre costume and character-construction.[13] Four vases, dating to the 4th century, demonstrate the position which Heracles now held in the cultural imagination and the symbolic currency of his costume. The first of these is the Pronomos vase which dates to c. 400 BC and shows a theatrical cast relaxing with Dionysus after a performance.[14] Importantly for us, there is an actor dressed in Heracles' costume and carrying his mask; he stands to the right of the couch on which Dionysus reclines.[15] There are hints that this figure is designed to invite reflection on the nature of theatre costume. Firstly, despite the distinctiveness of the costume which would easily give away the identity of the character played by this actor, the figure is inscribed with the name Heracles (while no such clue is offered for the more enigmatic role of the actor, who stands at the head of the couch). Furthermore, the actor's face and mask bear a striking likeness. What are we to make of this? One explanation is that the force (or persuasiveness) of Heracles' costume is so great that it becomes impossible to imagine a face asserting a different identity (i.e. that of the actor), in combination with it.[16] The image presents a deliberate puzzle which demands that the viewer reflects on the nature of theatre costume and the ontological state of an actor who wears it but carries the mask in his hand; he is in limbo between two competing identities (his own and the character's).[17] The very deliberate and provocative composition of this image, and specifically the Heracles actor on it, suggest that Heracles' costume, following the 5th-century performances discussed above, had become an obvious model through which to explore the issue of theatrically-constructed identity. This vase pushes the parameters of the existing discussion further, by extending the question of costume's operation to the off-stage setting.

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[13] For the reception of Euripides' *Heracles* within antiquity from a different perspective, see Riley (2008) 45–91.

[14] Pronomos vase, red-figure volute krater, Naples Museo Archeologico Nazionale H3240. For a comprehensive discussion of the vase, see Taplin and Wyles (2010) *passim*.

[15] Taplin and Wyles (2010) fig. 13.1, p. 233.

[16] Wyles (2010) 232–236. Another explanation is that the figure is in fact Heracles himself, see Buschor (1932) and (1951–1953). But even if this is the case, then since the figure carries a mask, he must be understood to be Heracles dressed-up in costume to play the part of Heracles! So it still invites reflection on the nature of theatre costume.

[17] The Attic red-figure *pelike*, now in Boston (MFA 98.883), invites similar reflection through the juxtaposition in its image of two chorusmen dressing up in costume (one fully dressed and in character, the other still dressing and therefore in ontological limbo between actor and character). The bell-krater fragment from Taranto (now in Würzburg H 4600 [L832]) depicting a tragic actor holding his mask also engages with the same idea (though in a less thought-provoking way, since there is neither the blurring of boundaries found on the Pronomos vase nor the suggestive juxtaposition of the Boston *pelike*).

The next vase shows a figure dressed as Heracles, indicated by the lionskin flying from his shoulders and club in hand, approaching a sanctuary door and followed by a slave, who is riding on a donkey and carrying baggage.[18] The connection between this vase and the opening of Aristophanes' *Frogs* is suggested both by the general outline of the scene and its details.[19] As such the vase implies a cultural familiarity with the scene and, therefore, offers evidence for the spread of the symbolic status held by Heracles' costume; that is to say, people in West Greece could now also recognise it as 'good-to-think-with' in theatrical discourse. The impact of the vase in strengthening the costume's status in this respect may be limited, since the image does not make it clear that this is Dionysus in disguise (only the identification of the scene can allow the viewer to fill in the gap).[20] If this is indeed how the figure was presented on the vase (rather than a result of restoration), then the image could only have evoked the theatrical statement made by Aristophanes (it does not reiterate it independently). On the other hand, the vase may offer significant evidence for the wider impact of Aristophanes' statement and the thinking about Heracles' costume which it invites, if it points to the performance of the play in the Greek West. This remains, at least, a possibility and, in light of Csapo's recent discussion of a number of vases of this kind, is one which I find inherently likely.[21]

The third vase also hints at Heracles' special place in theatrical discourse and confirms the spread of this thinking across the Mediterranean by the 4th century BC. The red-figure calyx krater from Paestum, South Italy, dates to the mid-4th century BC and shows a theatrical rendering of the madness of Heracles.[22] In the scene, Heracles, dressed strangely (see below), carries a baby towards a bonfire of furniture, while behind him, his wife Megara stands aghast in the doorway, holding a hand to her head. On the upper level between columns, *Mania* (madness), Iolaos and Alcmene look on at the action below; all names are inscribed. In the past Heracles' unusual costume and the furniture led to the suggestion that the vase reflected a 'tragicomedy', it is now generally accepted, however, to reflect a tragedy.[23] Though this

18 The vase is the Apulian krater, dated to 375–350 BC, now missing but formerly: Berlin St. Mus. 43046. Csapo (2010) fig. 2.4, p. 59.

19 Taplin (1993) 45–47, Handley (2000), and Csapo (2010) 58–61.

20 On this simplification by the artist, see Csapo (2010) 58–61 and Handley (2000) 157–158.

21 Csapo (2010) 38–82.

22 Signed by Asteas, Madrid, Museo Arquelógico Nacional 11094. Illustrated: Hart (2010) no. 33, p. 79 and Taplin (2007) no. 45, p. 144.

23 Bieber (1961) 130 suggests tragicomedy; refuted by Taplin (2007) who notes that there is

vase is evidently not inspired directly by Euripides' play, it suggests a 4th-century production which had an important connection to it.[24] Heracles' bizarre costume on the vase, in fact, hints at this relationship. Heracles wears elaborate plumed helmet and greaves, a *chlamys* (short cloak) decorated with stars and a border, and a transparent fringed *exomis* (*chiton* fastened at one shoulder). Strings of pearls hang down over his *chiton* and a set binds his upper arm. The transparency of the costume tells against assuming that the image reflects exactly what was worn on stage, yet Megara's costume is close to other depictions of tragic costume and suggests that, while there is not an exact conformity between pot and reality, there is not a complete disjunction either.[25] So what are we to make of Heracles' unusual costume? The feathers in the helmet are not as peculiar, or comic, as has been previously assumed, and the transparency of the costume may be put down to artistic convention (designed to show off Heracles' body).[26] But the really striking thing about the costume, apart from its transparency, is that it does not include Heracles' usual attributes of club, bow, and lionskin. This is not cross-dressing Heracles (cf. Ion's *Omphale*) nor is it Heracles in a poisoned *peplos* (cf. Sophocles' *Trachiniae*), but it is Heracles mad or 'no longer himself' (Euripides' *Heracles* 931). Without the inscription on the vase, the identification of this figure as Heracles would not be self-apparent from his costume (in contrast to the Heracles on the Pronomos vase, see above). It seems possible from this that the playwright expressed Heracles' loss of identity and madness in this play, through the exclusion of the hero's famous attributes.

A final pot completes the picture of the widespread cultural appreciation of Heracles' special status. This time the vase is from outside a theatrical context and suggests that Heracles was extending his role as a well-established model for thinking about theatre and now being used to reflect on the nature of art in general. The red-figure column krater, from c. 350–320 BC, is again from South Italy, and shows an artist painting a marble sculpture of Heracles, while the god himself, wearing his lionskin and carrying his club, creeps up,

no evidence for 'tragicomedy' as a dramatic genre in Italy at this time and denies any 'comic' elements in the picture.

24 See Flacelière and Devambez (1966) 103–104, and Taplin (2007) 143–145; *contra* Hart (2010) 79.

25 Csapo's principle of not expecting perfect conformity between pot and production details in the text is helpful, see Csapo (2010) 60. On tragic costume, see Wyles (2011).

26 On the feathers, see Taplin (2007) 145. In the same place, Taplin also implies that the transparency may suggest women's clothing, but the garment itself, the *exomis*, more readily suggests (to me) a slave or worker.

unseen, behind him.[27] The vase offers a visual juxtaposition similar to the one staged in the opening sequence of Aristophanes' *Frogs*. In the play, the contrast is between a failed attempt to create a character (through costume) and a successful one, and similarly the vase contrasts the half-formed representation of Heracles with the real thing to humorous effect. The image on the vase may be set at a remove from the stage, but it is possible to see a relationship between the idea played with in this image and the one explored in the opening of Aristophanes' *Frogs*: both choose to make a self-reflexive comment about their art through the figure of Heracles and both use visual juxtaposition to do it. The vase therefore offers evidence for the model set up by Euripides and Aristophanes being transferred from theatrical discourse and exploited for self-reflection by other art forms.

These four vases show the exploitation of the symbolic status of Heracles' costume, which had been set up in the 5th century, extending into the 4th century. The model is both reasserted and developed further through the engagements with it reflected in these vases. The last column krater in particular shows an expansion of the model beyond theatre and suggests that it had become especially well established in cultural consciousness. These vases' engagement with the Heracles model also needs to be understood in the context of the trend suggested by the production of *Heracles Choregos* by Nicochares, which was written around the same period as the Pronomos vase was made. This comedy presented Heracles as a theatre producer, involved at one point in giving directions about costume (fr. 8 K-A). Doubtless if more of the play survived, it would be possible to see how Nicochares used the figure of Heracles to reflect on other theatrical processes during the comic action. The comedy suggests that Heracles now held a place in the cultural imagination which could allow him to be used to think about theatrical processes in general. Collectively this evidence confirms the strength of the heritage left by Euripides' and Aristophanes' productions, and suggests that through it, Heracles emerged in the 4th century as a distinctive figure associated with the critical analysis of the nature of theatre and art in general.

The 4th-century evidence has demonstrated the reassertion of the symbolic status of Heracles' costume both through exploitations of it in theatre and outside it. Meanwhile, the text of Euripides' play, and even more importantly reperformances of it, kept the original model alive in the cultural imagination as a touchstone for these appropriations.[28] The evidence sug-

27 Metropolitan Museum of Art, attributed to Boston Group 00.348.

28 Texts existed at least by the time of Lycurgus' decree, see [Plut.], *Lives of the Ten Orators* 841F.

gests that the symbolic status of Heracles' costume was familiar over a broad geographical sweep (allowing the recognition of appropriations to many). So, for example, an inscription from Tegea, dating to the 3rd century BC, tells us of an anonymous actor's participation in performances of Euripides' *Heracles* at both the Delphic *Soteria* and the *Heraia*.[29] Visual evidence complements this inscription and suggests that Heracles continued to be a familiar figure on the tragic stage during the Hellenistic period or that, at the very least, performances of the play continued to be evoked in the cultural imagination through artistic representations. The terracotta figurine of a tragic actor costumed as Heracles (holding a club in one hand and the bearded mask in the other), dated to 175–150 BC and from Amisos, offers a representative example of this.[30] Whether the figurine was produced in response to a performance of Euripides' *Heracles* or another Heraclean tragedy (or simply theatre in general), continuing familiarity with Euripides' play could allow the figurine to evoke the remembered or imagined staging of it. This cognitive process brought the symbolic status of Heracles' costume, as established in that play, into greater prominence in cultural consciousness.[31] This figurine

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29 Stephanis (1988) no. 3003. On this inscription see also Revermann (1999/2000).

30 Paris, Musée du Louvre CA 1784. Illustrated in Hart (2010) no. 18, p. 49.

31 Violaine Jeammet suggests that the figure could represent the Euripidean hero given the play's popularity during the Hellenistic period, see Hart (2010) 49. The Tegean inscription certainly implies a strong performance tradition for the play since it is performed in two different festivals on the circuit and its selection suggests an assurance that it would be popular with the audiences of both. This is all the more striking, given the limited survival of inscriptional evidence for performances. This inscription therefore implies that were our evidence for the performance record of tragic productions in this period more complete, then Euripides' *Heracles* would feature amongst the most popular. Certainly the survival of two papyri from c. 250 BC, *P. Hibeh.* II 179 and *P. Heid.*VI.205, which record lines from Euripides' *Heracles*, suggest a continued familiarity with the text in this period and the much later papyrus from c. AD 215, P. Vat. Gr. 11, implies the persistence of its cultural presence (on these papyri see Bond (1981) xxxiii–v). Also significant here is the placement of the *Heracles Mad* as the climax in a list of Euripidean roles, starting with Canace from the *Aeolus*, played by Nero, see Suetonius *Nero* 21 (I am grateful to Judith Mossman for this point; see below for further indications of stage familiarity in the Roman period). So that, even if Euripides' *Heracles* did not emerge as one of the canonical tragic texts, on which see Easterling (1997c), it was nevertheless culturally familiar and suggests that any artistic representation of tragic Heracles might be interpreted by reference to Euripides' play. I would suggest, therefore, that the inscription and papyri demand that the tradition of representing the tragic Heracles (or actors in that role), in art, is understood to bear some kind of relationship to Euripides' play and performances of it. The much later evidence of Philostratus *Imagines* 2.23, shows exactly this kind of approach being taken to an artistic representation of the 'Madness of Heracles': he describes the scene and refers to his experience of hearing Heracles in the play of Euripides. This comment is used to direct his reader to the theatrical conjuring of the scene to enable them to picture the image. Here we have an appeal to the theatrical experience in order to

also suggests, if not necessarily the popularity of the tragic Heracles on the stage, then certainly his popularity in art which may point to the cultural prominence of the Euripidean tragic Heracles.[32] The survival of further visual evidence depicting the tragic Heracles confirms his popularity and by extension, the impact on the cultural status of the play.[33] At the same time, staged adaptations of *Heracles* and parodies of it, such as those found in two of Plautus' comedies, would also have brought the Euripidean original to life in the minds of the audience.[34]

The reassertion of the costume's symbolic status through these performances opened the door to a broader cultural appropriation of the model as interest in representing the tragic art grew. Heracles' costume, through its 5th-century treatment, offered a model to explore the processes of a theatrical event and also to represent them. He, or a piece of his costume, is shown standing for tragedy in general in a relief from Smyrna, dating to the 2nd century BC, on which Euripides passes Heracles' mask to the personification of the Stage (*Skēnē*).[35] Far more significantly, because it becomes a widespread phenomenon, his costume is taken on by Melpomene, Muse of Tragedy, as a means of symbolising her art form. The cultic association between Heracles and the Muses (in general) emerged in the Hellenistic period and is

be able to respond to a piece of art. The representations of the figure of tragic Heracles in art throughout antiquity, implies engagement in a similar process (whether on a conscious or subconscious level) and suggests that the play was being evoked, and its performance tradition being kept alive, in the cultural imagination.

32 The popularity is suggested by the use of terracotta—a cheap material for a mass market.

33 The figure from Amisos is, therefore, only a representative example and I would suggest, that the arguments that I make for it, would apply to this other evidence: the tragic statuette from the Athenian agora, c. 250 BC (Agora museum, Athens T862), the numerous representations of his tragic mask (*LIMC* 4, 257–270), his depiction in tragic costume on 1st-century BC Arrentine cup moulds (*LIMC* 4, 1481) in Pompeian wall painting, Bieber (1961) fig. 766, and in the Theatre of Sabratha in the early 3rd century AD, Bieber (1961) fig. 785.

34 Adaptations such as the one hinted at on the Asteas krater (see above). For parodies see Plautus *Menaechmi* 826–875 and *Mercator* 842–956. The parody in *Menaechmi* is of more direct relevance, since it includes stage-business with a comic substitute for one of Heracles' iconic props: Menaechmus II (Sosicles) threatens to pound and crush his enemy's every bone and limb with a stick (853–856) which in the context of the parody can be understood to be a substitute for Heracles' club (Menaechmus' threat, in his feigned madness, echoes Heracles' reported action, in actual madness, of striking his son with his club and shattering his skull, Eur. *Heracles* 992–994). The parody in *Mercator* is of a different importance, since if it imitates a parody already in Philemon's *Emporos*, then it suggests the place of *Heracles* in the theatrical landscape of the audience's imagination from the 4th century BC to the 2nd; on these parodies and the debt to Philemon see Frank (1932). I am grateful to the anonymous reader of the proposal for this volume, for directing me to Plautus.

35 Istanbul Arkeoloji Muzesi, 1242. See *LIMC* 'Herakles' no. 265 and Bieber (1961) fig. 109.

reflected in its art.[36] But it is later Melpomene, above all, who is connected to Heracles and is depicted wearing his lionskin, leaning on his club and carrying his tragic mask. One of the most famous examples of this type of representation is the marble statue of Melpomene now in the Vatican, which shows her holding the tragic mask of Heracles.[37] This statue dates to the 2nd century AD but there are earlier examples to show the cultural currency of this association, and the variety of media on which it is represented suggests a widespread familiarity with the conceptualisation.[38] Particularly important amongst this evidence is the series of *denarii* minted by Pomponius Musa in 66 BC, which included a coin showing Melpomene, leaning on a club, wearing a lionskin and bow, and holding a bearded tragic mask.[39] The coins secure the date of the emergence of this phenomenon in Rome to at least as early as their minting and possibly even back to over a hundred years before.[40]

In light of his costume's theatrical past and cultural status, the development of this specific association between Melpomene and Heracles comes as little surprise. Melpomene sports pieces of Heracles' costume because it had become the ready model through which to think about the theatrical process of becoming a character. Melpomene shows her tragic art form in action by wearing pieces of costume and carrying a mask, just like an off-stage actor. The advantage of Heracles' costume is not only that it represents a character which is clearly different from her own (and will therefore signify her theatrical appropriation of an identity) but also that it has a history in this discourse of representing theatre in operation. All this relied on the strength of the costume's symbolic status in the first place (reinforced by reassertion), but at the same time, Melpomene's appropriation of it ensured a widespread cultural familiarity with the special place of the costume in theatrical discourse well into the Roman period.

Theatrical activity in Rome also offers an explanation for the continued theatre-reflective status of the costume and the strength of its potential for cultural exploitation, and it is, in fact, pantomime performances which

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[36] See further *LIMC* 4, 'Herakles' pp. 810–811 and 816–817.

[37] Inv. 299 Museo Pio-Clementino, Vatican.

[38] Examples appear on mosaics, statues, coins, metal caskets, wall reliefs, and sarcophagi, see *LIMC* 7 under the supplements: 'Mousa, Musai' (by Faedo), 991–1013 and 'Mousa, Mousai/Musae' (by Lancha), 1013–1059.

[39] See *LIMC* 4 'Herakles' no. 1482 = *LIMC* 7 (supplement) 'Mousa, Mousai' no. 268; also Crawford (1974) 410/4.

[40] Webster argues that the coins' images may be based on the statues which M. Fulvius Nobilior brought back from his campaign in Ambracia and displayed in his Temple to Hercules and the Muses, dedicated in 179 BC; see Webster (1967b) 58–59 and 123–124.

play an important role in this. The status of Heracles' costume depended on its symbolic strength as a representative shorthand for stage-identity, and pantomime reinforced precisely this symbolic quality in the costume. Furthermore the meteoric rise of this new performance art to a position of widespread influence and appeal in Augustan Rome suggests the strength of its potential impact on the Heracles model.[41] The nature of pantomime performances, which typically involved one dancer performing all the roles in turn, restricted the costume changes to a minimum; the dancer would not leave the stage and change his/her robe, but instead switched over his/her mask and props in full view of the audience.[42] This put greater emphasis on stage-characters' dependence on costume. Pantomime, therefore, reinforced the symbolism already established for Heracles' costume and allowed it to maintain its status.

At the same time, the costume's history also offered this new art form the opportunity to explore its own representational nature.[43] An anecdote about a performance by the Augustan pantomime dancer, Pylades, shows Heracles' costume being put to exactly this purpose. According to Macrobius, Pylades was once dancing *Heracles the Madman* and got criticised by the spectators for not keeping to actions suited to the stage.[44] In response to this, he took off his mask and answered that his dancing was meant to represent a madman. In the same performance, he shot arrows at the spectators. The audience's intervention makes Pylades' performance into a live debate over the line between representation and reality and the nature of pantomime as an art form. The further detail about Pylades' shooting at the audience reveals the continuation of his engagement with the same question later in the performance; the actual, rather than mimed, use of the bow similarly invites reflection on the nature of representational art and its proper limits. It seems, in light of the costume's theatrical history, to be no coincidence that it should be Heracles' bow that is the instrument used to engage in such reflection. The anecdote reveals both the reinforcement of the symbolic status of Heracles' costume and also a development in its exploitation (as the self-reflective model is now applied to another art form).

Meanwhile, Heracles' costume also remained a familiar sight on the Roman tragic stage as Lucillius' 1st-century AD epigram about the tragic actor

41 On pantomime's emergence see Hall's introduction in Hall and Wyles (2008) 1–40.
42 See Wyles (2008).
43 It was also exploited in the discourse on plastic art, see above.
44 Macrobius, *Sat.* 2.7.16–17.

Apollophanes suggests; Heracles' club is listed amongst the props which the actor has supposedly sold in order to make some quick cash, suggesting the role's ready inclusion in an actor's repertoire.[45] This, together with the evident reassertion of the costume's status through representations of Melpomene and pantomime performance, leaves no doubt that Seneca had the inevitable task of negotiating the symbolism of Heracles' costume when he wrote his tragedy *Hercules Furens* in the middle years of the 1st century AD. Even if the performance context of this play remains controversial, its format (a dramatic text) must imply both Seneca's engagement with the performance history of this tragic theme and its impact on audience response.[46] Whether *Hercules Furens* was performed in a recital or in a more conventionally 'theatrical' performance, the props making up Heracles' iconic costume were present (either physically before the audience or conjured in their mind), and that presence implies embedded layers of symbolic meaning which had to be negotiated by Seneca. Given the special status of these props and the cultural prominence of the symbolism created by Euripides and Aristophanes, Seneca could not expect to overwrite their existing symbolism; so instead he exploits it. He makes Heracles' weapons the central focus to the final act of this play and creates much of the dramatic tension of the ending through an exploitation of their established symbolic status.

Above all, Seneca makes use of the idea that Heracles' iconic pieces of costume embody his identity, in order to create the sense of crisis and tension in the final act. At the end of Act 4, Amphitryon orders the removal of the weapons from the unconscious Heracles, in case he goes mad again (1053).[47] The action is intended for his protection, but, in fact, its dramatic effect (whether on the stage or in the imagination) is to strip Heracles of his identity. The scenario is the same as in Euripides: the play's closure will depend on

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45 *Anthologia Palatina* 11.189.

46 The Senecan performance issue remains controversial; for a summary, see Zimmermann (2008). The suggestion that these texts were performed in recitals goes back to Schlegel in the mid-19th century and has been championed in modern scholarship by Zwierlein (1966). A broader perspective on the issue is emerging, however, with the further exploration of Zimmermann's suggestion that Seneca composed his tragedies with pantomime in mind, see Zanobi (2008), and with the recent proposition that the plays were even written to be performed by Nero, see OKell (2005) 188. I remain open to the possibility of performances other than recitals and find it difficult to believe that a culture so enamoured with performance and spectacle could leave play texts, themselves so engaged in visual spectacle, unperformed (save for recitals).

47 These 'weapons' include Heracles' bow, club and lionskin, as 1085–1088 and 1150–1154 confirm.

Heracles' difficult process of choosing to live and of accepting the identity which his weapons now impose. There is, however, an important difference to Seneca's formulation of this crisis and process: Heracles' weapons have been taken from him and his requests for them back are with the intention of harming himself.[48]

The tension in Seneca's scene is, therefore, over whether it will be possible to persuade Heracles not to use the weapons against himself (if he regains them). The dynamic of this struggle is very different from Euripides' play in which the battle is primarily over persuading Heracles to unveil himself. The Euripidean Heracles responds to crisis by withdrawal and has to be coaxed into action, while the Senecan hero responds by action (or intended action) and has to be restrained from it. The result is that the weapons are given even more attention in Seneca than in Euripides, since these become the focal point for the play's resolution. Seneca, therefore, develops the Euripidean treatment while at the same time reasserting its strength (through the emphasis on the costume's importance to identity).[49] Whether Seneca's text was intended for the stage or not, its impact for subsequent appearances of the Heraclean costume on the tragic stage is to reinvigorate the Euripidean layer to its symbolism.[50] At the same time, the continued visual presence of the costume on stage enables the textual traces of Euripides' costuming strategy to remain alive, even when the play was read.

While the costume's symbolism could be exploited by Seneca to create meaning and tension within his play, it also retained its potential to offer commentary on the nature of theatre. Further testimony to the strength of the foundations laid by Euripides and Aristophanes is found in the continuation of the costume's currency as an exemplum in theatrical discourse. When Libanius, the 4th-century rhetorician from Antioch, composed his defence of pantomime dancers and tackled the issue of the immorality suggested by what they wore, he turned to the aid of Heracles:

> For if the types of clothing had so much power, and character took its alterations from that, it would be a godsend, for those in an establishment to dress themselves up like Heracles and by means of a lionskin and club to alter

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48 Seneca *HF* 1229–1230, 1242–1243, 1271, 1298, 1300.

49 For a fuller analysis of Seneca's treatment of costume in this play, see Wyles (2007) 246–285.

50 It is clear that Heracles remained a familiar sight on the tragic stage; see, for example, the following references in Lucian's works: *Wisdom of Nigrinus* 11; *How to write history* 23; *Apology for the 'salaried posts in the great houses'* 5; *The dead come to life or the Fisherman* 31–33. For discussion of tragic costume in Lucian, see Kokolakis (1961). Stage familiarity is also implied by Philostratus' reference to Heracles, see *Imagines* 2.23.

> their life-style. But it is not possible, just as the slave cannot change his fortune either if he ever puts on the tunic of the master, either surreptitiously or indeed, when his master actually allows him for fun.[51]

The issue at stake here is the transformative power of costume. It is exactly this issue which Aristophanes engages with in the dressing-up scenes of *Acharnians* 292–489 and *Thesmophoriazusae* 39–279, and revisits, this time using Heracles' costume, in his *Frogs* (see above). Aristophanes' choice of costume in *Frogs* is not incidental but exploits the theatrical statement made in *Heracles*: Euripides had demonstrated the transformation (re-construction) of a stage character through costume, and Aristophanes explores a counter-example in which the costume does *not* transform as it should. At the core of both dramatic treatments of the costume is the question of transformation and the ontological status of the stage character: Heracles is stage-dead until he unveils himself and puts his iconic costume back on, whereas in *Frogs*, Dionysus' own stage presence prevents him from successfully creating another. In Libanius, the issue is set at a further remove since he addresses the question of whether the *performer* is transformed by the adoption of costume, but the central concern is still the same. Libanius' choice of Heracles, and specifically his lionskin and club, as a means of exploring the issue and refuting his opponents, points to the strength of the model set up by the 5th-century stage treatment of the costume and confirms that it had been firmly established as the *locus* to discuss the ontological issues surrounding the creation of a stage character.

Conclusion

The passage of Libanius also hints at a final facet of the significance of Heracles' costume which evidently influenced his choice of it. While the costume's continued value in theatre (where its symbolism was both exploited and re-asserted) and in theatrical discourse (within plays, in texts, in artistic representations of the tragic art) should by now have become clear, the picture of its broader *cultural* significance is yet to be completed. In fact, Heracles' costume becomes a centrepiece in discourses of power and it is precisely its suitability for exploring ontological status that makes it such a potent symbol

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[51] Libanius *Oration* 64, 53; translation Molloy (1996).

in this domain.[52] Alexander the Great, Gaius and Commodus are all reported to have dressed up in Heracles' costume.[53] The context of this dressing-up is left deliberately vague in each case, yet the hints of a theatrical framework for the adoption of the costume are not entirely suppressed.[54] Whether or not the action was intended to be theatrical, the point is that it was possible to interpret it theatrically and though Heracles is listed as just one of a variety of gods whose attributes are adopted (in the cases of Alexander and Gaius), playing with *his* costume arguably had different implications, given its history.[55] The appropriation of the costume, read in a theatrical light, invites reflection on the issue of ontological status—if costume transforms, then are these leaders men or gods? The 5th-century treatment of Heracles' costume had given it the status of a semiotic shorthand for the process of transformation enacted through theatre costume. The adoption of the costume by these leaders when framed theatrically, could, therefore, evoke the transformative power of its attributes. I am not suggesting that these leaders were necessarily making a claim to divinity through dressing up, but rather that the action (and the possibility of a theatrical interpretation of it) invited consideration of the question. Heracles' tragic costume was the perfect medium for the blurring of lines and suggestion of ontological ambiguity. This prominent real-life experimentation with the ontological implications of Heracles' costume made it an even more potent example for Libanius. It also draws attention to a possible explanation for why Heracles' costume became such a powerful model in theatre. Apart from the costume's suitability as an inherently identity-strong outfit and Euripides'

52 Even before Euripides' play, Heracles had probably already been used to political ends by Peisistratos, on which see Boardman (1972), (1975) and (1989), though for arguments against see Moon (1983) 97–118, esp. 101–106 and Cook (1987). But my point here is that the theatrical treatment of Heracles' costume and the symbolic meaning which it invested in his attributes gave a new potential meaning to any ruler's appropriation of them. The connection between Heracles and theatricality may not have been necessary to these leaders' identification with Heracles but it certainly altered the possible interpretation of the association.

53 Alexander: Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 12, 53 = 537d–e; Gaius: Philo *Embassy to Gaius* 78–79; Commodus: Herodian 1.14.8.

54 The passage in Athenaeus opens with a reference to Alexander performing tragedy. Bellermore (1994) makes a persuasive case for Gaius' 'career' as a pantomime dancer being misrepresented (so as to hint at blasphemy) in this passage.

55 There is necessarily the possibility of disjunction between each leader's intention for an action and its subsequent interpretation; a case in point is Antony whose association with Hercules is presented in a theatrical way by Plutarch for the purposes of exposing Antony's character through comparison to tragic or comic Heracles, see *Antony* 4 with Pelling (1988) ad loc. I am grateful to Judith Mossman for this point.

part in emphasising this, Heracles himself, as an ontologically ambiguous figure (between man and god), suggests a ready model for thinking about transformation and the theatrical process of 'becoming'.[56]

[56] So that even if Heracles' ontological ambiguity makes him 'almost taboo' as a project for tragedy (see Silk (1985) 7), ironically it is precisely this status which makes him an excellent model through which to think about the theatrical processes underpinning tragedy.

WEAPONS OF FRIENDSHIP: PROPS IN SOPHOCLES' *PHILOCTETES* AND *AJAX*

Judith Fletcher

> By definition, a prop is an object that goes on a journey
>
> (Andrew Sofer[1])

Stage props are powerful generators of meaning that are inseparable from other elements of the theater. Distinct from passive scene-setting objects, they interact with the material presence of the actor, the authorial words of the script, and the reception of the spectators to create drama. This essay will focus on the dynamic network linking objects, bodies, text and audience in two Sophoclean dramas that accord great importance to stage properties, specifically the bow of Philoctetes and the sword of Ajax. It is significant not only that both these props are weapons, but also that these weapons are, rather paradoxically (especially in the case of Ajax), gifts that evoke the protocols of ritual friendship.[2] As indispensable stage props they are, moreover, extensions of the embodied characters, Philoctetes and Ajax, and additionally of two other men, both deceased: Heracles and Hector, who seemingly haunt the dramas, and who thus give special meaning to the objects that Philoctetes and Ajax handle.

Even the most rudimentary production of the tragedies must acknowledge the materiality of the bow and the sword. The plot of *Philoctetes* is organized around the acquisition of the bow of Heracles which is in the possession of Philoctetes and which the Achaeans require to conquer Troy. The sword of Hector is the instrument of Ajax's suicide, the climax of the drama, although there is controversy about how that event was staged in the original production. My thesis is that these objects, the bow and the sword, each so central to the meaning of their respective tragedies, gain their significant status within the drama because they import a narrative history that connects

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1 Sofer (2003) 3.

2 See Herman (1987) 60–61 on the role of gifts in ritualized friendship.

each protagonist with another male who has died before the play opens, but who still continues to "haunt" the dramatic text. Both tragedies exemplify Carlson's concept of the "haunted stage:" not only are *Philoctetes* and *Ajax* haunted in that they rely on their audience's memory of previous "ghost" texts, but dead men actually continue to influence living men, so that the past intrudes persistently and uncannily into the present.[3] The points of entry for these phantoms, in both cases, are stage properties, the bow and the sword. The objects are gifts that have brought with them the spectral presence of their former owners who never entirely relinquish them. The bow and the sword summon up, as it were, a "ghost-text", that relies on the audience's recognition of an earlier narrative.

These are not the only objects in tragedy that possess such semiotic density and narrative power. Most tragedies could be produced with minimal stage properties; when they are obviously necessary, however, they can have a potent effect on the dramatic action.[4] While objects in the real world derive meaning from their utilitarian function, stage properties have more complex meanings. Any object that is part of a dramatic production exists, to quote Elam, in "quotation marks".[5] It is a link between the world of the audience's experience, and the representation of reality that they apprehend. The Sophoclean weapons that I am considering go beyond this function to serve as links between the dramatic past and present. To quote Sofer they take a "journey". In other words, their semiotic functions develop or change over the course of the drama.

Tragedy features several instances of objects that import a history that impinges on the dramatic present. Among the most common are recognition tokens. In plays such as Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*, Sophocles' *Electra* and Euripides' *Electra*, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, and *Ion*, small tokens prove the identity of characters and legitimatize their relationship to other characters by evoking past events. A piece of textile proves the identity of Euripides' Ion, and weaves present and past together. Often these tragic stage properties become symbols of a particular history that will offer a resolution to a problem. After the revelation of the tokens, a bond is re-established between family members. These are not static objects that simply help to set the

[3] Carlson (2001) 11: all theatre "is as a cultural activity deeply involved with memory and haunted by repetition."

[4] As Taplin (1978) 77 notes in his survey, properties are used sparingly in tragedy, an economy that emphasizes them when they are employed.

[5] Elam (2002) 8.

stage (as a table might signify a kitchen), but like the bow and the sword they signify a past relationship, and carry with them a narrative of these relationships.

These two features—history and interpersonal relationships—are elements of the weapons that I am about to discuss. Some stage props, like the recognition tokens, are indispensable to the drama and occupy a position between the material world of the stage that is occupied by the actor, and the text as narrative, i.e., the history of the action leading up to the present. Other stage properties, while still performing this function, are more dangerous, operating as narrative kernels that, at the moment of crisis, irrupt into the action, bringing their dangerous history with them. In other words, they do not resolve the crisis (or effect the *lusis*), but rather help to create it. Most notable among these are the gifts sent by Medea to Jason's new bride, and by Deianeira to Heracles. These gifts have histories; in the case of Medea we learn only that they are her inheritance from her grandfather Helios. But Deianeira's gift to Heracles is more complex. The casket that she gives to Lichas contains a garment that the audience does not see, but which they know is anointed with a salve given to her by the centaur Nessus. The most significant relationship in the drama is between Nessus, who seeks revenge, and Heracles who will die from the centaur's poison. The gift, both complex and concealed, activates this revenge. The duplicity of Deianeira, like that of Medea, registers as a form of concealment of the object.

The stage props that we are about to discuss are also gifts, and also function to secure relationships between men. They exist in the material space of the theater, as unconcealed and potent signifiers of a past that is about to penetrate the present. They illustrate Sofer's observation that such objects can "become drawn into the action and absorb complex and sometimes conflicting meanings."[6] They also challenge the notion of ownership or possession in the strictest sense. Neither the bow nor the sword belongs completely to the men who hold them, but they are still in some way under the control of the dead donors whose presence haunts the action of the play. Furthermore since these objects are weapons they have a potential to be used as such; the implied destination of their journey is a violent one, and always looms on the horizon of the audience's expectations.[7]

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[6] Sofer (2003) 2.

[7] Elam (2002) 85 elaborates on the Jaussian idea of an audience's "horizon of expectations" which include its knowledge of the text, and conventions of the genre and production.

I. *The Bow*

Philoctetes' bow is certainly one of the most significant stage properties in extant Greek drama: as Taplin observes, it is the "most integrally incorporated material object" in tragedy.[8] It is one of the few possessions that Philoctetes has brought to Lemnos, which in Sophocles' version is a desolate isle with a single human occupant. There is significance in this emptiness, especially for an audience who might hold it up against the earlier productions of Aeschylus and Euripides, both of whom made the chorus inhabitants of Lemnos, and thus neighbours of Philoctetes.[9] But on Sophocles' imaginary island there is no man but the rejected and abject Philoctetes. This "eremetic space", as Rehm so appropriately calls it, lacks all forms of human culture save one.[10] The invincible bow and arrows that Heracles bestowed on Philoctetes, in gratitude for igniting his funeral pyre, have been the only non-natural objects on Lemnos. Their unique status is set against a landscape that is frequently invoked or described: Odysseus and Neoptolemus refer to the topographical features including the entrance to the cave; Philoctetes apostrophizes his surroundings, including the cliff from which he threatens to hurl himself. Any production, original or subsequent, would need to represent these natural elements.[11] Moreover, the audience is called upon to visualize spaces beyond what it actually sees: another door to the cave, a shoreline, a wilderness of rocks and crags with their various flora and fauna. And this contrived naturalness, both visible and beyond, is a backdrop to a multi-layered drama of duplicity and shifting meaning. Indeed characters' awareness of their surroundings, the descriptions and apostrophizing, unite language and topography. But most pertinent for this discussion is the simple fact that language enlarges the physical space that is apprehended by the audience. Concomitantly there are elements beyond the spectators' vision that include much more than the landscape.

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[8] Taplin (1978) 89; see his full discussion ((1978) 89–93) on how the significance of the bow develops and deepens in light of what is said and done in connection with it. Segal (1980) 299 is more monolithic suggesting that the bow symbolizes civilization.

[9] Dion of Prusa (*Or.* 52) compares the three versions of *Philoctetes*. Although all three dramatists feature the theft of the bow, only in Sophocles' tragedy does the bow possess special properties.

[10] Rehm (2002) 139.

[11] Webster (1956) 66 gives a plausible recreation of the original production that includes an *ekkyklēma* to represent the ledge from which Philoctetes threatens to jump. Seale notes that the scenic details are not simply a backdrop but are personalized. Philoctetes addresses the natural features in an intimate way. "More than any other hero in Sophocles, Philoctetes is a character defined by natural context," Seale (1982) 26.

As we must imagine, the landscape has remained inert until the play opens; the only human activities, Philoctetes' foraging and hunting, are routine, and have become part of the terrain. They change nothing. Philoctetes is himself but one step away from the natural world, a wild man, a primitive cave-dweller who would prefer to remain separate from human history rather than return to Troy. The bow, the single cultural object, is all that stands between the abandoned man and the natural world; it is a tool that gives him some sort of dominance over his environment, but only enough to keep him alive. Without the bow, Philoctetes cannot survive; he would become prey for those creatures that he now hunts (as he realizes in his despair, 1156–1158). Yet its existence in this landscape—at once so seemingly barren and yet so pregnant with meaning—is consistently being redefined. For most of the dramatic action the bow is never actually used; it is ostensibly static, but nonetheless it throbs with significance, calling upon its past, poised before its future, each equally as momentous and glorious. The bow is what prevents Philoctetes from being consumed by his environment, but more importantly it is ultimately what causes him to leave that environment; it is the reason that Odysseus and the Greeks come to Lemnos. Thus the bow evolves from a means of keeping one man alive, to a weapon that will destroy a city. It exemplifies Sofer's definition of a prop as an object manipulated by an actor in the course of a drama: "something an object becomes rather than something an object is."[12] This conception of the enlivened stage property helps us to appreciate the dynamic presence of the bow in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*.

The bow then has a career. Its past and future of are, of course, absent from the immediate view of the spectator (just as the Lemnian landscape in which the bow has operated is invisible); the bow, although it is no ordinary object, exists for now in a mundane present, although that is soon to change. We must note that Philoctetes' use of it, as an infallible hunting weapon, a simple object, is a purpose much reduced from that of its original owner.[13] While Heracles killed mythical Stymphalian fowl, Philoctetes shoots ordinary doves 'to provide sustenance for my belly' (288). This utilitarian function contrasts evocatively with the bow's special prestige. And it demonstrates how a stage property derives meaning and purpose from the character that handles it.

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[12] Sofer (2003) 12.

[13] Harsh (1960) 411–412 observes that Heracles used the bow for civilized purposes, to rid the earth of menaces, while Philoctetes' present use of the bow is a "little ridiculous". Ringer (1998) 118 describes it as a "prop whose proper use has been subverted by the wounding of Philoctetes, and his abandonment by his comrades." Of course we should not ignore the fact that the bow is still a cultural object, a weapon that helps Philoctetes survive in the wilderness.

For Philoctetes the bow is his livelihood, but this is a day of transition. The other men who have come to Lemnos cause the bow to become something much more significant.

The bow "absorbs meaning", to borrow Sofer's terms, from these visitors to Lemnos.[14] We lose something essential to our understanding of the "lively" stage property, if we try to identify the bow as a stable signifier. Harsh, for example, thinks of the bow as "an objective and unchanging symbol against which the three vacillating human figures are constantly being measured throughout the play." Gill notes that the bow is "the special instrument of arêtê (heroic achievement) that is inseparable, in the play, from friendship."[15] These interpretations, although they are certainly useful, position the prop as a fixed signifier. Sofer's approach, on the other hand, allows us to go beyond these attempts at stable semiotic classification. As he argues, a stage property is not "a static or stable signifier whose meaning is predetermined by the playwright." A prop's impact is mediated by gestures of the individual actor who handles the object and by the horizon of expectations "available to historically situated spectators."[16]

Accordingly any prop becomes most enlivened during "periods of semiotic crisis."[17] And the slippery signification of the bow is at the heart of this play. Its meaning is up for grabs, literally and figuratively. Philoctetes obstinately refuses to give it up; he insists that the bow be dedicated solely to sustaining him in his solitary existence on this lonely island. And yet spectators know that there is more to the bow than this. They know this because Odysseus will tell Neoptolemus so in the early moments of the play, but they also know its history because they bring something to the drama. Their own horizon of expectations adds meaning and nuance to the bow. There is a history and a career attached to this object; its mere presence is enough to import a complex narrative: Heracles' exploits, his death indirectly by the venom of his own arrows mixed with the blood of Nessus, and his own enmity towards the Trojans. And the bow promises just as complex a future—the conquest of Troy, the behavior of Neoptolemus, so noble in this play, but (according to the Epic Cycle) so ruthless in war. This stage prop illustrates how the sheer physical reality of *opsis* can never be separated from text or plot.

The bow falls into Sofer's category of a "lively prop" because it "transcends the default function of stage objects: *to convey visual information about*

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14 Sofer (2003) 27.

15 Harsh (1960) 414; Gill (1980) 137; see further Segal (1981) 299 on the bow signifying civilization.

16 Sofer (2003) 61.

17 Sofer (2003) 67.

the world of the play in as unobtrusive a manner as possible."[18] Philoctetes, justifiably angry at the abandonment, deceit and betrayal that he has experienced, desperately wants the bow to remain in the "default function". He would deny, and we must sympathize with him here, the transcendent function of the bow. Now with the arrival of Odysseus, Neoptolemus and their crew there is human concourse, the motion of entrances and exits (all the more notable for being thwarted or unexpected), supplications, struggles and threats of suicide. All this activity, of course, centers on the weapon, the "primary element in the special mechanics of the action."[19] The arrival of the envoy will change the bow's purpose and meaning, but not without an intense struggle.

For all the dramatic movement in the tragedy, as Seale observes, the real action is internal: the maturation of Neoptolemus, who becomes a man during the scope of the drama, and who develops an ethical sense that supersedes any loyalty to his commander.[20] This character development is facilitated by the bow—the bow is the focus of his attention, just as it is for every character in this play. The young man's duty is to obtain the weapon; as Odysseus tells him, "only this bow will take Troy" (αἱρεῖ τὰ τόξα ταῦτα τὴν Τροίαν μόνα 113, cf. 68–69). And as the older man realizes, there is no way that Philoctetes would relinquish the precious object to him; he accurately predicts that the man whom he abandoned years before still bears a serious grudge.[21] Neoptolemus has a clean slate in this respect; as a member of a different generation than the suitors of Helen, he would seem less disingenuous. His apparent innocence, however, is only a façade that masks the real agenda of obtaining the bow. Let us observe then, that the bow provokes an act of theatricality. Odysseus instructs Neoptolemus by saying that he can obtain the invincible weapon by a ruse (σοφισθῆναι, 77). Neoptolemus must lie about his relationship with Odysseus and his purpose for being on the island.

Accordingly, Neoptolemus' mission requires him to act a part, to be an actor. The bow demands this of him; the prop charges the drama with a deep theatricality. According to an anthropological explanation this deceit and role-playing is contingent on Neoptolemus' pre-adult status, since ritualized trickery is often associated with ephebes who are about to be initiated into

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[18] Sofer (2003) 28, italics in the original.

[19] Seale (1982) 49, who comments on prominence of stage spectacle, motion and conflict (unique among Sophoclean drama).

[20] Seale (1982) 50.

[21] See Blundell (1989) 185–186 on the necessity of Neoptolemus approaching Philoctetes.

manhood.[22] An understanding of the initiatory motif may have been part of the original audience's horizon of expectations, but it is not necessary to fit the text into this template in order to observe how the prop makes characters take on certain roles. Neoptolemus plays himself, but interestingly this role involves the creation of a history in which Odysseus robbed him of his father's weapons (362–390). Only moments before this he seemed to be in a cooperative relationship with Odysseus, so the narrative seems to be part of the ruse, although like all good lies it contains an element of truth.[23] A notional shared enemy brings the older and the younger man closer. It is Achilles' good reputation, and an earlier bond of friendship that allows Philoctetes to trust the young man. The mention of Achilles imports an Iliadic intertext into the drama: it facilitates the audience's recognition that Philoctetes seems to be enacting the role of the obdurate, isolated Achilles who rejects the embassy in *Iliad* 9, and refuses to join the battle. The bow, however, exerts a more powerful effect than the Iliadic text: Philoctetes cannot keep up the Achilles act forever.

In the little play-within-a-play featuring Neoptolemus and the false merchant, staged for the benefit of Philoctetes, there is no mention of the bow. The merchant says only that Philoctetes is needed for conquest of Troy—the bow is carefully ignored. Of course it makes its entrance with Philoctetes who had introduced himself as master of Heracles' bow (262).[24] It is there for all to see, but it is, for the time being, just an object. Neoptolemus has pretended not to know anything about Philoctetes, and it is not until the exit of the merchant, when Neoptolemus has promised to take Philoctetes home, that the young man speaks of the bow. He does this quite naturally: Philoctetes has to collect his scant belongings, which include stray arrows that might have scattered (652). "Is this the famous bow that you hold?" asks the youth, as if he had only just noticed it. It is at this point that the bow becomes a meaningful stage property; it starts to become alive. Neoptolemus asks for a closer look, and perhaps the chance to handle the bow as if it were "divine"

22 Vidal-Naquet (1981) 175–199 on the *ephebeia* and deception in *Philoctetes*; Lada-Richards (1997) 1–26 on meta-theater and the *ephebeia* in *Philoctetes*.

23 I think that the earlier cooperation between Neoptolemus and Odysseus, and the latter's instructions for him to use trickery, make the theft-of-the-arms story suspicious; cf. Podlecki (1966a) 237.

24 This is the first time that Heracles is named. Philoctetes again mentions the bow of Heracles at 942–943. In his apostrophe to the bow, he refers to himself as "the comrade of Heracles" (1143). At 1406 he refers to the "shafts of Heracles" as weapons to ward of enemies when he returns home with Neoptolemus. With the exception of 1410, when Heracles announces himself, Philoctetes is the only character to mention Heracles by name.

(ὥσπερ θεόν, 657). We should not be too cynical about this moment, because there is really no need for Neoptolemus to deceive at this point—his plan thus far has been successful. Instead let us note that this ritualistic language calls the numinous quality of the bow into play. It was never just a bow, any bow, but it was waiting to be recognized for what it is—a vital stage property that will take its meaning from the action, but will also bring meaning to the text.

Remarking on Neoptolemus' desire to "look closely" at the bow, Lada-Richards observes how the object now becomes a "stage-prop uniquely capturing the boy's concentrated sight." The bow is highlighted as a theatrical object, an item to be gazed upon in wonder.[25] Neoptolemus' reverential handling now draws the audience's gaze to the bow.[26] As soon as it leaves Philoctetes' hands—and note that it takes half the play for this to occur—things start to move very quickly. In response to Neoptolemus' request to handle the weapon, Philoctetes responds that this is permitted because Neoptolemus possesses arêtê. He emphasizes that no other man has touched the bow since he received it from Heracles. As Taplin notices, the transfer, "gives the bow a new dimension, a moral significance: it is an object of special trust, and it may be handled only by an outstanding benefactor of the owner—someone who stands to Philoctetes as he did to the greatest of all heroes, Heracles."[27]

This temporary gift of the bow, as Taplin suggests, is gesture of friendship that recalls the relationship between Philoctetes and Heracles. The prop is thus handled in a manner that adds to its meaning, but as a consequence it summons up the memory of Heracles and of actions that occurred long before dramatic time. The ghost of Heracles, as it were, is now imposed on the character of Philoctetes, who identifies with him not only because his relationship with Neoptolemus mirrors Heracles' relationship with him, but also because his own misfortunes resemble those of Heracles. The bow is fundamental to this identification. The two new friends exit with the weapon into the cave, while the chorus sings about the joyful homecoming of Philoctetes. Even in his absence they persist in their deceit. Neoptolemus is on the verge of success and it seems that he will be able to trick Philoctetes

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[25] Lada-Richards (1997) 179.

[26] The reverential treatment of the bow here illustrates Elam's axiom that "phenomena assume a signifying function on stage to the extent that their relation to what they signify is perceived as being deliberately intended", Elam (2002) 18.

[27] Taplin (1978) 90.

into boarding the ship for Troy. But when the men come out of the cave, Philoctetes is seized by an acute attack of his malady.

Philoctetes now hands the weapons once again to his new friend for safekeeping, with the hope that "they may not be so full of woe for you as they were for me and the one who owned them before me (776–777)." Like Yorick's skull Heracles' bow is a reminder of an absent subject. It is as if the weapon, when bestowed as a gesture of friendship, carries with it a ghost of its former owner. "Props are haunted mediums", as Sofer observes.[28] In this case the weapon seems to impose the physical condition of its donor onto its new owner. Philoctetes like Heracles is being wasted away by a flesh-eating disease—although the cause and career of the two ailments are not identical, the agony is comparable. As the pain becomes more intolerable Philoctetes envisions himself as Heracles, and he pleads with Neoptolemus to take his own role in the immolation of his predecessor (799–803):

> ὦ τέκνον, ὦ γενναῖον, ἀλλὰ συλλαβὼν
> τῷ Λημνίῳ τῷδ' ἀνακαλουμένῳ πυρὶ
> ἔμπρησον, ὦ γενναῖε· κἀγώ τοί ποτε
> τὸν τοῦ Διὸς παῖδ' ἀντὶ τῶνδε τῶν ὅπλων,
> ἃ νῦν σὺ σῴζεις, τοῦτ' ἐπηξίωσα δρᾶν.

> O child, noble youth, take me, burn me up, noble boy,
> in that fire that is called Lemnian. I, too, once deemed it right
> to do this for the son of Zeus, in return for these same weapons,
> which you now keep safe.[29]

A flurry of stage action now follows: Neoptolemus, who still holds the bow, reveals the truth of his mission and the necessity of Philoctetes' presence in Troy with the weapon; smitten by a pang of "strange pity" (965), he then decides to return the bow to the disconsolate Philoctetes. Odysseus intervenes; there is a tussle for control of the weapon. Perhaps Odysseus bluffs when he claims that either Teucer or himself could wield the bow in Troy (1055–1059), but he prevails for the moment. He leaves with Neoptolemus, who returns after the kommatic exchange between Philoctetes and the chorus (1081–1216).[30] Failing to persuade the recalcitrant exile back into battle, Neoptolemus finally agrees to take Philoctetes home. There is further violence for control of the bow, and Neoptolemus must defend his decision against

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28 Sofer (2003) 27.

29 All translations from the original Greek are my own.

30 Seale (1982) 40–41 notes that when Odysseus appears, the bow remains with Neoptolemus, "symbolic of the power of decision that still rests with him."

Odysseus.[31] He then asks Philoctetes to stretch out his hand to receive the weapon, the culminating gesture in a series of references to hands.[32] Is the bow an extension of Philoctetes, or is it the other way around? Can he choose what to do with the bow, or does the stage property now have a life of its own?

During all this activity the function of the bow has been hotly contested, and subtly redefined. Odysseus insists that it must be used as a weapon to defeat Troy; Philoctetes, especially in his kommatic exchange with the chorus, considers the bow to be essential for his existence on Lemnos. To fully appreciate how bereft he is, we need to bear in mind that the spectators have never seen him without the bow, but during the entire kommos the weapon is absent. Philoctetes laments it (apostrophizing it as a lost friend, 1128–1140) as he laments his own sure death: without this "nurturer of a miserable life" (1125) he will be unable to feed himself (1105–1110). Even though he has learned that the bow is essential for the conquest of Troy, he nonetheless refuses to think of it as anything but a hunting weapon.

Although Neoptolemus restores the weapon to Philoctetes, he tries to redefine its function. He insists that the bow must be used in battle, and indeed verifies this opinion with a recitation of the oracle, but he cannot persuade Philoctetes to join forces with the Greeks. When he fails to persuade the wounded man even with a promise of healing, he concedes to take him home. But although Neoptolemus has reluctantly agreed to take Philoctetes and the bow back to Greece, the bow is undergoing a transformation. The action performed on the stage property suggests its new significance. That Philoctetes is starting to think of the bow as a weapon against men, not just beasts is evident when he finally tries to use bow against Odysseus (1299–1301):

Φι. ἀλλ' οὔ τι χαίρων, ἢν τόδ' ὀρθωθῇ βέλος.
Νε. ἆ, μηδαμῶς, μή, πρὸς θεῶν, μὴ 'φῇς βέλος.
Φι. μέθες με, πρὸς θεῶν, χεῖρα, φίλτατον τέκνον.

Phi: But you [Odysseus] will take no pleasure [in the fall of Troy], if this arrow flies straight.
Neo: No, don't, by the gods, let the arrow fly.
Phi: Let go of my hand, by the gods, dearest boy.

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[31] Seale (1982) 43 remarks on how the "melodramatic" tussle with Odysseus reveals Neoptolemus becoming "his own man".

[32] See Ussher (1990) 156. There has been an increasing emphasis on hands. Philoctetes demanded a right hand pledge from Neoptolemus before he slipped into a coma; Odysseus puts his right hand on his sword (1255); Neoptolemus responds with the identical gesture.

This is the first time the bowstring has been drawn and the arrows aimed during the performance, and it signifies unequivocally that this instrument is not simply a means of securing food, but can be used in combat between men, albeit the arrow is aimed against the wrong man here. But again, having persuaded Neoptolemus to take him home, he promises to use the bow to defend his savior against any Greeks who might attack him for supporting Philoctetes. Of course once he has returned home he no longer needs to forage for sustenance, so the new purpose of the bow is not surprising. But it is remarkable how this promise seems to trigger the divine intervention of Heracles, which implies that Heracles still defines the function of the bow. This *deus ex machina*, required to keep the plot on course, has disappointed many scholars who see it as the ultimate humiliation of Philoctetes. But Taplin gives a more positive interpretation:

> Heracles is the visible and audible proof that Philoctetes has not gone through all his suffering only to do a favour to the leaders of the Achaeans.[33]

The appearance of Heracles also confirms that he possesses the bow—in both the supernatural and the genitive sense—and will continue to possess it as it goes to Troy. He announces that Philoctetes will use it to kill Paris, and to acquire plunder that will be an offering to himself (1431–1432). And Philoctetes, whose sufferings and friendship had each seemed to be programmed by the experience of Heracles, will reenact an earlier heroic deed of his friend by using the bow to take Troy a second time. As the wielder of the bow he will recreate Heracles' destruction of Troy (1439–1441).[34] And thus ends the journey of this liveliest of all tragic stage properties.

II. *The Sword*

The sword that Hector gives to Ajax is a more sinister object than the bow that Heracles bequeaths to Philoctetes. According to Charles Segal it betokens "the mutability of human affairs," as Ajax comes to realize that his enemy's

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[33] Taplin (1971) 39. Gill (1980) 139 notes that "Heracles implies that possession of the bow—the visible symbol of the capacity for heroic action in partnership—carries with it the obligation to exercise that capacity in action." The disappointed critics include Ussher (1990) 11 for whom the resolution only emphasizes that the gods are evil; and Ringer (1998) 124 who believes that Sophocles created characters that refuse to conform to their traditional roles, only to use the gods to force them into compliance. Both critics fail to account for the positive aspect of Philoctetes' return home and eventual healing.

[34] According to Homer (*Il.* 5. 638–642) Heracles used his bow to destroy Troy after he was cheated of payment for building its walls.

gift, even if it was ostensibly offered in friendship, cannot but bring harm to himself and the Achaeans.[35] Like the bow, the sword is an object exchanged as a gift, and like the bow it is never entirely in the possession of its recipient. The important difference between the bow of *Philoctetes* and the sword of *Ajax* is the context in which they were given. When Hector gives the sword to Ajax in the *Iliad* (7.303–312), he names it as a friendship gift, but with the understanding that Trojan and Greek will meet again on the morrow to continue their combat.[36] To quote Segal once again, the sword "links donor and recipient, the Trojan and the Greek, in a bond not of friendship but of battle to the death, the true constant of their relationship."[37]

Clearly this "weapon of friendship" has, like the bow, a history stretching back before the opening of the stage action, a history that reaches into the drama to connect with the present. It, too, is an object that takes a journey; its significance develops in the course of the play. The sword is also an object of prestige that begins its stage career not as a weapon to be used in battle but as an instrument that kills animals. There is, however, a significant difference here. Ajax misuses the sword in a bout of insanity when he kills livestock in the belief that he is slaughtering his enemies. Deprived of the weapons of Achilles, which he feels he deserves, he now turns on his former comrades the Atreidae and Odysseus. Athena in one of her most malicious moments does not stay his hand (as she did for Achilles in the *Iliad*), but rather makes him hallucinate that he is confronting the Achaeans who insulted him. She gloats at the delusion, but Odysseus is less sanguine. He finds the spectacle sadly instructive as an exemplum of human existence (125–126):

> ὁρῶ γὰρ ἡμᾶς οὐδὲν ὄντας ἄλλο πλὴν
> εἴδωλ' ὅσοιπερ ζῶμεν ἢ κούφην σκιάν.
>
> For I see that we who live are nothing more than
> phantoms or fleeting shadows.

Odysseus universalizes Ajax's experience, and thus gives meaning to his sufferings. Nonetheless it is Ajax's unique torment to leave the delusional world where he subdues his enemies, and re-enter a reality in which he is now deeply shamed: as Tecmessa recognizes, he experienced pleasure in the fantasy, but now feels pain as he returns to the world he shares with her (271–276). The spectral world of his imagination quite obviously impinges on

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35 Segal (1980) 127.

36 Kane (1996) 18–21 effectively disputes the claims by Jebb and Stanford that the sword is a "guest-gift" similar to those exchanged by Glaucus and Diomedes (*Il.* 6. 119–238).

37 Segal (1980) 127.

the reality in which the disgraced hero must now exist. This contrast is made most forcefully when Tecmessa reveals the traumatized Ajax to the chorus, his shipmates. Opening the door to the *skēnē* she introduces the spectacle of her disgraced man wallowing among the slaughtered and tortured animals (346–347):

> ἰδού, διοίγω· προσβλέπειν δ' ἔξεστί σοι
> τὰ τοῦδε πράγη, καὐτὸς ὡς ἔχων κυρεῖ
>
> Behold him; I have opened the door. You can look at his deeds,
> and the condition he finds himself in.

The audience had seen Ajax earlier in the grips of his delusion—at that point he was a spectacle to be revealed by Athena to Odysseus; now he is made into a spectacle again, not by a goddess but by a woman, and his degradation seems to be complete.[38] He calls on his shipmates as they gaze upon him in his humiliation: 'do you see (ὁρᾷς) the bold warrior, the strong of spirit …' (364). The emphasis on looking and spectacle here is noteworthy. Ajax's own vision has been twisted along with his mind (τόδ' ὄμμα καὶ φρένες διάστροφοι, 447). Both the external and internal audience (Odysseus) witness the first display in a series that will culminate with the ceremonial suicide of Ajax.

The juxtaposition of the delusional killing of his enemies on the actual slaughter of the livestock, however, has another very pointed implication. Ajax's fictional victims, his enemies, are also the enemies of Hector. As the play unfolds it becomes apparent that the personality of Trojan Hector has in some sense been superimposed on Ajax. Sophocles manipulates his audience's reception by making allusions to the Iliadic figure of Hector, so that when the sword is finally highlighted as the property of Hector, the spectators have already become aware of his ghostly influence. A spectral version of Hector is apparent in Ajax's interaction with his concubine Tecmessa, a scene which (as many critics have recognized) evokes the poignant scene on the Trojan Walls, the *Homilia*, between Hector and his wife Andromache. The ghost text becomes noticeable when Tecmessa tries to dissuade her husband from suicide (485–524), an echo of the conversation between Andromache and Hector (*Iliad* 6. 407–465): the claim that her husband must replace her dead family; the plea not to leave his son an orphan; the imperiled status of a wife left captive in a strange land. These citations do not turn Ajax into Hector, but contrast the patriotic Trojan with the increasingly isolated Achaean.

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[38] In his discussion of the opening moments of the play Seale (1982) 145 remarks that Athena speaks "not of disclosure but of exhibition" when she reveals Ajax to Odysseus.

Nonetheless they import the Iliadic figure into the shadowy backdrop of a play that has already intimated the existence of different psychic realities, a world of "phantoms and fleeting shadows".[39]

Hector haunts this play, just as Heracles haunted *Philoctetes*, although the audience does not quite know why yet. It is not until Ajax prepares for his suicide that the figure of his Trojan enemy-friend is expressly mentioned. In a famous speech that has exercised scholars, he achieves his *anagnôrisis*, one of the most philosophical recognitions of tragedy. An external audience who knew the story of Ajax's suicide could understand his words to mean that he is going to die, but his internal audience, Tecmessa and the chorus, interpret his words more optimistically to mean that he will submit to the Atreidae.[40]

What is significant for our discussion is that this is the first time that Ajax mentions the sword, which he specifies as the cause of his misfortune (646–692): a gift of an enemy (δώρημα δυσμενεστάτου, 662) that is in reality no gift: "ever since I took this gift, I have had no good from the Greeks." Indeed Ajax uses language to suggest a kind of identification with the sword: "For even I, who used to be so tremendously strong—yes, like tempered iron—felt my tongue's sharp edge (στόμα) emasculated by this woman's words (650–652)."[41] In response to this softening, this impulse to change from his stern fixity, Ajax intends to die.

He describes the preparations for the sword, which will be buried in Trojan soil, "where no one will see it" (658–659). It is at this point that Hector's sword becomes the focus of attention, just as the bow of Philoctetes was put in the spotlight by Neoptolemus' reverential words. The sword, which must have been in Ajax's hand at the opening of the play, has not been specifically labeled as Hector's sword—unlike the bow of Heracles—but thus labeled it is transformed from an ordinary sword to a "lively prop".[42]

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39 These similarities are discussed by Brown (1965) 118 who proceeds to illustrate how Hector, with his devotion to family and city, functions as a contrast to Sophocles' Ajax. Similarly, Sorum (1986) 369–372 notes how the Homeric echoes help to distinguish between Ajax and Hector, and thus "explode the parallels."

40 Tecmessa is present during this meditation; Ajax sends her indoors at its conclusion (685). The controversy over the lines (the term *Trugrede*, or "Deception Speech" is a misnomer), full of calculated double-entendres is endless. Is Ajax purposefully deceiving Tecmessa and the Chorus, or do they misunderstand his ambiguous language? See Crane (1990) 101 n. 1 for a summary of the issues and bibliography.

41 This is Jebb's translation. στόμα (651) also means "weapon point", e.g. *Il.* 15. 389; see Cohen (1978) 30 on the double meaning.

42 As Taplin (1978) 85–86 notes, it is not obvious from the text when the sword is first seen by the audience, but from the comments of Athena and Odysseus it is clear that he had used the sword to kill the cattle (10, 26, 30, 55, 97, etc.).

Ajax leaves with the sword; there is an interlude when the messenger reports the oracle of Calchas warning that Ajax must remain indoors. Tecmessa sends the chorus in search of him; and she leaves the scene. Suddenly the acting space is empty, an unusual phenomenon in tragedy. This lonely spot is now occupied only by Ajax.[43] It is a remarkable moment of theater shared by the audience and the isolated warrior. The spectator is afforded a privileged glimpse of a private moment, and at the center of this spectacle is the sword, anthropomorphized now as "the butcher" (ὁ σφαγεύς, 815). In violation of one of the conventions of tragedy Ajax apparently kills himself in full view of the audience, an act that is both intensely private and unseen by any internal spectator, and yet is simultaneously shared by the external audience.[44] It is impossible to reconstruct the staging of this suicide, but it would be anticlimactic, to say the least, to have it occur out of sight of the audience.[45] "Props come to life when they confound dramatic convention," as Sofer realizes.[46] In the presence of the audience this stage property becomes a focal point of the action, and reveals the absent subject who has been haunting the text from the very beginning. But during this moment of isolation, as he is hidden from the humiliating gaze of any internal audience, Ajax dies a warrior's death, smitten by the sword of his enemy. It is as if the sword of Hector, even before it physically enters the body of Ajax, has already taken control of its victim. So uncanny is the force of the object in his possession, it is as if the object possesses him. The literary ghost of Hector never really relinquishes his ownership of the sword, just as Heracles never truly lets the bow out his control. And the sword does not stop being a prop once it has entered the body of its victim. Like Hector, Ajax remains unburied for some time. After the suicide, his corpse, still pierced by the sword, remains in view of the audience until Tecmessa covers it with a cloak.

[43] Scullion (1994) 89–129 has challenged the common notion that there was a change of scene after the departure of the chorus at 812. Heath and OKell (2007) 363–380 explore the implications of this unchanging scene for the rest of the play.

[44] Ajax's suicide remains one of the great mysteries of Sophoclean stagecraft to which I can offer no solution. How did he fall on his sword before the audience, and how did the actor playing Ajax leave the acting space to return as Teucer? Suggestions include the use of an *ekkyklēma* or a screen, but to my knowledge there has never been an answer that proposes an elegant use of the conventions of fifth century dramaturgy. For a discussion of the different proposals, see Worman's lengthy note ((2001) 241 n. 52.

[45] I fully agree with Seale (1982) 165 that, "The text and the dramatic development require a visual, not an imagined climax."

[46] Sofer (2003) 28.

The woman who had displayed the abject hero to the chorus, now covers his body from view.[47]

III. *Conclusion*

"One must not put a loaded rifle on the stage if no one is thinking of firing it."[48] Chekhov's famous dictum has a special applicability to Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and *Ajax*. Their focal stage properties take a journey that ends with them being used as weapons. Both heroes have of course employed their weapons to slaughter animals before the play begins, but both the bow and the sword, which appear on stage with the heroes, will assume their most deadly function, which is to kill men, during the dramatic action. Philoctetes will eventually draw the bow—it cannot sit idle, or it would disappoint audience expectations. The bow does not kill anyone during the performance, but, as I have argued, once Philoctetes aims it at Odysseus he tacitly activates the true function of the bow. The sword that Ajax handles, or rather mishandles, fulfills its function as a combat weapon when it kills Ajax. Furthermore, as "haunted mediums" these stage properties evoke the absent subjects who "possess" the weapons. The ghostly presences of Heracles and Hector seem to share the bodies of the actors representing Philoctetes and Ajax, and to guide the stage properties on their journeys.

[47] As noted above (n. 44), this would be a dramaturgical necessity in the original production since the actor who plays Ajax must return to play Teucer.

[48] The dictum is rephrased several times, but this particular quote comes from a letter to Aleksandr Semenovich Lazarev 1889.

SKĒNĒ, ALTAR AND IMAGE IN EURIPIDES' *IPHIGENIA AMONG THE TAURIANS*[*]

Robert C. Ketterer

As far as we can tell, *Iphigenia among the Taurians* involved an unusual amount of invention on Euripides' part. Previous mythical and historiographical accounts had variously rescued Iphigenia from her sacrifice at Aulis, had associated her with the worship of Artemis, and sometimes placed her on the north shore of the Black Sea among the Taurians, where there was also said to be a cult of human sacrifice. But as far as scholarship has been able to discover, no previous teller of the Atreid story had sent Orestes on an Argonautic-like quest to rescue both Iphigenia and the image of Artemis from the local king and bring them back to be lodged in Attic shrines.[1] There has, moreover, been increasing evidence that Euripides invented at least some aspects, and perhaps all the details, of the Attic cult practices that Athena initiates at the end of the play.[2]

This essay focuses on the physical properties that contribute to the play's novelty: the *skēnē* that represents Artemis' sanctuary, the altar that stands in front of it, and the image of Artemis that Iphigenia brings out of the *skēnē* as the action reaches its climax, all three associated with the cult of human sacrifice that threatens to destroy the Atreid line once and for all. The discussion explores the shifting significations of these inanimate elements in *Iphigenia among the Taurians* as their meanings are established and then modified by the words of the actors.[3] As the play progresses, the set partakes

[*] I wish to thank the editors for their encouragement and careful assistance as I wrote this article. Any errors are my own.

[1] Platnauer (1938) vii–xiii; Hall (1989) 110–112; Cropp (2000) 43–46; Kyriakou (2006) 19–22.

[2] There is no archaeological and scant literary evidence that Iphigenia was connected with the worship of Artemis in Attica. See the extensive discussion of Kyriakou (2006) 23–30 and especially notes *ad* 1458–1461 and 1462–1467a. Similarly, see Scullion (1999–2000). Disagreement with Scullion is to be found in Seaford (2009) and M. Wright (2005) 357–359.

[3] The approach to stage properties here has been informed by my own work on Plautine props (Ketterer 1986a) and by Dingel (1967 and 1971). General statements on props in Greek tragedy may be found in Taplin (1978) 77; Raeburn (2000) 149; Ley (2007a), especially 274–279. For a recent detailed study of how stage properties—both visible and verbally described—can have cognitive value for audience interpretation of what it sees and hears see Chaston

in a dialogue with the words and action, at first reinforcing a sense of threat and dread while it appears that sister may sacrifice brother, and then acting as a foil for the action as Iphigenia separates herself from Artemis' cult and manages the Greeks' escape.

We will first observe what the stage-setting probably looked like to the audience as the play began, and then how the significations of the stage properties shift boldly over the course of the prologue, *parodos* and first episode (1–391). Of special importance to this gradual acquisition of meaning is the presence of the Black Sea, which lies unseen near Artemis's temple: the verbal descriptions of the sea and seashore combine with the visual properties to create a larger imaginative set, and create a numinous atmosphere that suggests impending doom, but also potential for new creation. In this physical context Iphigenia devises a ritual of purification that provides the means for the Greeks to steal Artemis' image and make their escape. Her invented ritual implies in addition the final cleansing of Orestes' blood-guilt, and, I will argue, supplies an unstated, visual preparation for the sudden appearance of Athena as *dea ex machina* at the end of the play.

Let us begin with the *skēnē* as it appears at the play's beginning. It represents a temple and walled precinct. The temple is in the Doric peripteral style with triglyphs, and a gilded exterior. Central gates are secured with bronze bolts and fixtures.[4] Iphigenia comes out of these doors to speak the first part of the prologue. In front of her, probably in the orchestra, there stands a monumental altar that "drips down murder" (καταστάζει φόνος, 72).[5] Its cornices (θριγκώματα and θριγκοῖς, 73–74) are stained with blood; they are also hung with the spoils (σκῦλα, ἀκροθίνια, 74–75) of sacrificial victims, which may have been pieces of armor or the victims' own heads: Cropp translates

(2010), together with the review by Sansone (2010). I also found helpful ideas about types and meanings of tragic stage space in Padel (1990). For the ability of stage properties to convey history and narrative see Revermann, this volume.

[4] The relevant lines are 95–97 (exterior wall), 99 and 1286 (bronze fixtures on doors), 113–114 (triglyphs, hence Doric style), 128–129 and 405–406 (columns and gilding). See Kyriakou (2006) 37. The details of the temple were probably painted on a canvas covering for the *skēnē*. Pylades suggests they might climb in by a scaling ladder (97), suggesting probably that they must first get over a precinct wall. The text here is vexed and the exact details of the temple a little unclear: Cropp (2000) 57 and *ad* 113–114; Kyriakou (2006) *ad* 113–114a.

[5] The text gives no indication of where the altar was located. The description suggests a large structure that would be too big to sit on the stage and was probably in the orchestra. Thus Poe (1989) 127 and cf. 137; Cropp (2000) 57 and n. 110. But see Kyriakou (2006) 37, who believes the altar was on the stage rather than the orchestra. This essay assumes the altar is a three-dimensional object sitting in the orchestra.

ἀκροθίνια as "top pickings."[6] In the second part of the prologue Orestes and Pylades enter and describe the set using this language (69–75), but as the play begins, the audience must infer the character of the place without the benefit of an actor's interpretation.

Soon we learn that this temple houses Iphigenia (66) and the image of Artemis (87). As the play progresses, the characters refer to human sacrifices and burning the remains inside the temple, which indicates there is an unseen altar inside for performing the rites (470–471, 626, 725–726, [1155]).[7] The exterior altar is therefore an image of the interior, its decor making the interior scene visible. Initially, however, an audience, with only the visual cues to work with, would identify the stage as a sacred space connected with human blood and death. Nor when Iphigenia enters to deliver the first part of the prologue, do her words immediately identify the temple's deity or location. She begins instead with her family line: Tantalus, Pelops and the daughter of Oinomaus, Atreus, Menelaus, Agamemnon and Tyndareus' daughter. Last in the list she utters her own name (5), and describes in much greater detail her sacrifice at Aulis to Artemis by her father (6–27). The list is concise and does not elaborate on the family tragedies that lie behind it, other than her own.[8] But for the time that it takes for Iphigenia to speak the first twenty-seven lines, the stage altar with its human fragments (actual or represented by pieces of armor) and streams of dried blood becomes first a gruesome visual reminder of the family's history implicit in Iphigenia's brief genealogical list, and then becomes a vivid backdrop for the story of the sacrifice at Aulis. Burnett has argued that the brevity of the genealogy is part of an effort to "leave the crimes as they were but to obscure them whenever possible by a crowd of fine images."[9] I suggest that the altar stands as a vivid reminder of what the words do not say.

At line 18 Iphigenia names Artemis as the deity who demanded her sacrifice at Aulis and then describes how Artemis stole her away and sent

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6 The text describing the altar is somewhat uncertain; figurative language has resulted in confused readings in the manuscript. Some have argued the temple itself was hung with σκῦλα and stained with blood, citing the chorus at 402–406 where human blood moistens "altars and colonnades." Cf. Hdt. 4.103, who says the Taurians impaled the heads of victims on stakes; Amm. Marc. 22.8.33 says they hung them on temple walls. But as Kyriakou points out, at this moment in the play the two men seem only to be inspecting the altar. For the text and interpretations see Hourmouziades (1965) 52–53 and n. 2; Cropp (2000) 57, and notes *ad* 67–75; Kyriakou (2006) 37–39 and notes *ad* 72–75.

7 O'Bryhim (2000) argues that the details of sacrifice come from Phoenician and Carthaginian rites. For his compilation of the details of the Taurian rites, see ibid. 30–31.

8 Kyriakou (2006) *ad* 1–5: "The succinctness of the genealogy is striking."

9 Burnett (1971) 63.

her to the land of the Taurians and this temple, where she oversees a cult devoted to loathsome sacrifices (28–41).[10] These lines establish the identity and nature of the temple and altar in the present dramatic time and associate Iphigenia with them as their principal agent.

Iphigenia ends her portion of the prologue scene with an account of her previous night's dream, which was full of architectural detail: she was swept back again to her maiden rooms in Argos, where she saw the whole house shaken to the ground. The cornice (θριγκόν 47) of the house fell, leaving only one column standing that had blond hair (κόμας … ξανθάς, 51–52) and a man's voice. In her dream Iphigenia anointed this column with her "stranger-killing skill" (53). Awake, she misinterprets the dream-omen, and believes it was a sign that Orestes has died. She exits back into the temple to prepare a ritual of mourning for Orestes. Orestes and Pylades enter from the *eisodos* and describe to one another the architectural detail of the onstage altar with vocabulary that repeats Iphigenia's description in her dream, thus linking the visible altar with the dream's message: her collapsed cornice and blond-haired column become the ξάνθ' … θριγκώματα of the altar. It is now clear what a true interpretation of the dream should be: Orestes alone of the family has survived and is present. There is imminent danger that Iphigenia herself will sacrifice him and that his remains will serve as ἀκροθίνια on the onstage altar. The altar has become a potent visual signifier of the threat that faces brother and sister, and an ironic marker of their inability to interpret the facts that lie before them.

At this point we first learn that Orestes and Pylades have been sent to steal the goddess' image housed in the temple (85–92). Unable to see a way into the temple, the two men retreat back to a cave by the seashore to plan their next move. Iphigenia then leads in the chorus, and during the *parodos* pours a libation in memory of Orestes onto the ground (160–166), as is suitable for an offering for the dead. The scene re-enacts the *parodos* and first episode of Aeschylus' *Choephoroi* (22–211), but with the difference that the tomb of Agamemnon has been replaced in *IT* by Artemis' bloodstained altar, where his daughter may kill her brother rather than reunite with him.[11] The chorus recounts once again the family's tragic history, lamenting the fall of the house of Atreus (186–190), referring obliquely to the quarrel of Atreus and Thyestes

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[10] The text is disputed in lines 38–41, and it is possible that the exact nature of Iphigenia's sacrifices may only have been made clear at lines 53–58 where Iphigenia refers to her τέχνην ξενοκτόνον. See Cropp (2000) ad loc.; Kyriakou (2006) *ad* 35–[41].

[11] On the general debt of the *IT* to the *Oresteia* see Burnett (1971) 70–72; Sansone (1975) 292; Kyriakou (2006) 22–23 with bibliography in 22 n. 15.

(191–197), and finally naming the whole family "the children of Tantalus" (200). The family history, they sing, has piled murder upon murder, anguish upon anguish (φόνος ἐπὶ φόνῳ, ἄχεά τ' ἄχεσιν, 197).[12] As the chorus sings these lyrics, they must dance near or around the altar, which takes on once again the significations it had in opening of the prologue when Iphigenia related her family lineage and Orestes had remarked that the altar "drips down murder" (φόνος). Choral movement, music, words and the stage-set combine to create a theatrical sign of the tragic horrors of the house. Iphigenia then concludes the *parodos* with a lament for her own fate (203–235), focusing first on her role as sacrificial victim at Aulis, then on her role in the sacrifice of other foreigners who, lamenting and weeping, pour their blood out on the altars. At the end she weeps not for these victims but for Orestes, whom she believes to be dead.

There is no altar quite like this in extant Greek tragedy. Even its basic signification, that of an altar for human sacrifice, is not its own, but belongs to the imagined place of sacrifice within the sanctuary. Its especially gruesome appearance makes it a place of destruction rather than a protector of suppliants or a place to make offerings that will bring salvation from troubles.[13] Cropp calls the altar a "permanent symbol of the character of the Taurian sanctuary."[14] As we have seen it is also a kind of screen on which various meanings can be projected by the actors and chorus according to whether they are speaking of the past or present. Temporally therefore the altar unites past and present, shifting with the first 235 lines of spoken text to illustrate or memorialize the past violence of the Tantalid family, the sacrificial altar at Aulis, and the immediate threat to Orestes and Pylades.

The first episode continues to extend the meaning of the set, locating it in a larger imaginary landscape that will impact the outcome of the play. In the prologue, Orestes had addressed Apollo (85–86), saying, "You told me to go to the boundaries of the Taurian land, / Where your sister Artemis has altars." Iphigenia described herself as an inhabitant of barren lands in the hostile sea (218–219). The messenger speech in the first episode provides a description of the geographical boundary on which the temple and altar sit, and the imaginative "set" is thus expanded to include the land and sea that surround the onstage sanctuary.[15]

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12 The text of this choral ode is desperate; I am accepting, *exempli gratia*, the emendation of Barnes.

13 Dingel (1971) 352 n. 84.

14 Cropp (2000) 57.

15 Padel (1990) 343 calls this theatrical "space-at-a-distance," one of those dramatic "places

Shirley Barlow has observed that the language of the *IT* continually calls to mind the sea's presence, suggesting that it "provide[s] a recurring visual focus for the main action."[16] However, in the first episode that focus is blurred, since language describing the sea and the land are conflated. At the end of the *parodos*, a cattle herder arrives, who reports that he and his fellows have captured Greeks at the seashore who may be sacrificed to Artemis. Iphigenia is puzzled: "And what have herdsmen to do with the sea?" He replies, "We went to wash the cattle in sea water." (254–255). Iphigenia accepts the answer without comment, but the mental image of cattle and herdsmen wading in the sea is slightly disorienting.[17] The tension of this juxtaposition is re-emphasized by the diction and hyperbaton of the herdsman's lines as he begins his monologue at 260–261:

> ἐπεὶ τὸν ἐκρέοντα διὰ Συμπληγάδων
> βοῦς ὑλοφορβοὺς πόντον εἰσεβάλλομεν …
>
> (When we were driving the forest-fed cattle
> into the sea that flows from the Symplegades, …)

The cattle are not at the shore because that is their usual haunt: they are "forest-fed" (βοῦς ὑλοφορβούς), the rhyming adjective invented by Euripides sounding vaguely absurd caught between the phrase "flowing through the Symplegades" and the word "sea".

The cattleherd reports that two foreigners had been observed in the cave at the shore. As the herdsmen were debating what to do about them, one of the strangers suddenly appeared to go mad and waded into the water. He began to slaughter the cattle "like a lion" (297), while crying out that a Fury was swooping down on him from the air, about to fling at him the stony image

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spectators were invited to imagine when someone came in from far off bringing news from outside." She believes that most tragic settings are "poised on a threshold or boundary" (356), but she is thinking principally of the *skēnē* and the door to its interior. I argue that in *IT* the larger conceptual set that includes both the visible properties and and the imagined seascape beyond comprises that tragic boundary where, as Foley (1985) 64 says, there takes place "the fulfillment of a divine plan and … a constructive escape from the disaster of a crippling past."

16 Barlow (1971) 25. She adds, "It is by the sea, just offstage, that all the most important events of the play (except the recognition scene) take place." Edith Hall and Matthew Wright have also examined the importance of the Black Sea for the *IT*; Hall (1987); Wright (2005) 158–225, especially 169–191. On the significance of the seashore for the play see Buxton (1992) and (1994) 103.

17 Kyriakou (2006) ad loc., cites passages in Vergil *Ecl.*3.96 and Theoc. *Id.* 5.145 as comparanda, but in these cases sheep and goats (not cattle) are in fresh water. In a personal communication, a colleague reported having seen sheep in Greece washed in the sea to rid them of ticks.

of his mother. The quick phrase "like a lion" calls to mind the violent heroism described in similes in epic in which the hero successfully visits mayhem and slaughter on his opponents. But the circumstances of Orestes' battle immediately undercut any heroic impression the simile may make.[18] Orestes makes the Homeric image too literal by attacking real cattle, and so his actions must also evoke the wretched and ludicrous irony of Ajax's end, when he went mad and attacked real cattle, mistaking them for his enemies.[19] The mix of allusions is surreal: a tragic hero who is like a lion appears to be trying to slaughter Furies who are actually cattle while standing hip-deep in sea water. The oddity is consistent with the peculiarity of herdsmen congregating at the seashore. The conflation is continued further as the battle moves to the land: instead of blowing the usual war trumpet used in tragic battle narratives, the herdsmen blow on conch-shells to rally their forces (303), and attack the two Greeks in a "wave" or "surge" (316).[20]

Orestes' land battle in the water demonstrates his larger predicament: he has come to steal the ξόανον of Artemis from the local temple, and so the sea and land surrounding that temple as well as its people are united in the opposition to his quest. Both sea and land are given the anthropomorphizing epithet "hostile", "inhospitable" (ἄξε(ι)νος): the land is so described early in the play by a despairing Orestes (94), and the chorus use the synonym ἄμεικτος (402). The Black Sea, which Orestes had to cross to get to the Taurians, is repeatedly termed ἄξεινος by the characters and chorus, and by the play's two messengers who report Orestes' struggles with the sea.[21] This sense of the combined hostility of the elements is reinforced by the references to

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18 E.g., *Iliad*, 12.298–307, 16.751–754, 17.61–69, 20.164–173. Hector fighting at a disadvantage at 12.41–48 is particularly relevant here. For lion-similes in epic and in drama see Wolff (1979), who notes that the uncontrolled savagery in the simile can have negative connotations. I think Wolff overstates the negative in his reading (147) of this passage in *IT*. It is interesting to note, however, that Euripides here appears to reverse the simile from the way it is used in A. *Eum.* 193 where the Furies are like avenging lions and Orestes their victim (Wolff (1979) 146–147).

19 A reference to Ajax in this passage is also noted by Platnauer (1938) *ad* 254 and by Grégoire in Parmentier and Grégoire (1948) 124 n. 1.

20 *IT* 316: κλύδωνα πολεμίων, "surge of enemies". Cf. Soph. *El.* 733; Eur. *Ion* 60; *Supp.* 474; *Phoe.* 859. Kyriakou (2006) ad loc., notes the literal use of κλύδων elsewhere in the play at 756, 1379, 1393, 1397. Hall (1989) 122 explains the seashell as primitive, or at least rustic: see also West (1992) 121 on conchs and horns, where he notes that a cattle horn (κέρας) was available to rustics. A cattle horn would be a reasonable alternative here for the cattle herders, but Euripides seems deliberately to make a marine connection.

21 Lines 125, 218, 253 (herdsman), 341, 394–395, 437, 1388 (second messenger). Manuscript L has the later term εὔξεινος, but that has been emended to forms of ἄξεινος by general agreement. See Buxton (1992) 212; Wright (2005) 169 with notes 41–42; Kyriakou (2006) ad 123–125; for the ancient name of the Black Sea, see Allen (1947); Bond (1981) *ad* E. *Herc.* 410.

the Symplegades, or Clashing Rocks that block ships' entry into the Black Sea.[22] Iphigenia makes the first reference with a cogent statement of this hostile pact between the sea, the land and its inhabitants when she calls the Taurians "those who live within the crashing rocks of the the unfriendly sea." (124–125).[23] The temple itself, at the opposite end of this unfriendly sea from the Symplegades, is also a meeting of land and crashing waves: Orestes says the temple is at the borders of the Taurian land (85); Thoas observes that the sea surge falls upon the temple itself (πρὸς αὐτὸν ναὸν ἐκπίπτει κλύδων, 1196).

Yet there exists in this dramatic landscape the possibility of success as well as mortal danger. Mircea Eliade has concluded from a comparison of creation stories that dangerous bodies of water can be characterized as the first, pre-creative form "of cosmic matter, and, at the same time, the world of death, of all that precedes and follows life."[24] He observes further that "An unknown, foreign, and unoccupied territory (which often means 'unoccupied by our own people') still shares in the fluid and larval modality of chaos." Applied to the *IT*, these observations suggest that Orestes, by passing over the unfriendly sea to the land of the Taurians, faces a threat of death which is mythically the equivalent of the non-existence or chaos, but is also the state of being that precedes creation. The *mise en scène* contains the potential for both success and failure, and the first audience of this new version of the Atreid story could not be certain at this point which aspect of this world might prevail.[25]

This is not overly abstract theorizing applied to an individual case. As Matthew Wright has pointed out in detail, Euripides similarly identifies the sea as an obstacle and a configuration of potentially creative chaos in his *Andromeda*, which was probably produced within a few years of the *IT*.[26] *Andromeda* provides a clear case of the sea as a chaotic and hostile

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22 They are mentioned seven times in this play, nearly always in connection with threat or difficulty: 124–125, 241, 260, 355, 746, 889–890, 1388–1389.

23 Πόντου δισσὰς συγχωρούσας | πέτρας ἀξείνου ναίοντες. The line may rather belong to the chorus: Kyriakou (2006) *ad* 123–125. For the Symplegades as gateway to barbarism and chaos see Eur. *Medea* 1, a play in which there is also considerable reference to the sea (Porter (1986) 27). Hall (1987) 429 suggests that, "[T]he rocks are the mental as well as the physical barrier between darkness and light, the unknown and the known, barbarism and civilization."

24 Eliade (1959) 41–42.

25 In regard to the ambiguous nature of the sea, compare also Buxton (1994) 99–100: "The sea made all things possible [for the Greeks]. Like all friends, however, it was potentially false. … It was hard to know when the sea's dark side would burst out."

26 On dating, see Wright (2005) 44–46. Wright groups *IT* together with *Andromeda* and *Helen* in important thematic ways, including their collective interest in the danger and

force, although in a different configuration with the power of earth and sky. Andromeda, chained to a *skēnē* that represents the seacoast of her own land, is to be a victim of the sea in the persons of the Nereids and the devouring sea monster they call forth; Perseus, son of the sky god Zeus, possibly flying in on the *mechanê*, ultimately kills the sea monster and rescues the earth maiden. He is then opposed by the natives of the land, whom he defeats, and then flies with Andromeda back to the sky, ultimately to beget children by her. In mythic terms, this is a conquest of watery chaos, followed by a subordination of earth to heaven. In the final scene of *Andromeda*, the presiding deity (probably Athena) announced that the whole cast was ultimately to be immortalized as a group of constellations.[27] The ancient astronomical writers describe the configuration of these constellations as retelling the moment when Perseus is about to kill the sea creature that threatens Andromeda.[28] Thus, the moment of heaven's conquest over chaos and then earth was monumentalized in heaven itself as a celebration of that victory and of the established order of the cosmos. This final act of creation will be an important point of comparison in relation to the aetiologies at the conclusion of the *IT* and the final meanings of its stage setting.

If the comparison of the *IT* with the *Andromeda* shows Euripides thinking in similar mythological and narrative terms as he wrote both plays, then we can also see more clearly the special danger in *IT*. In the *Andromeda* Perseus faced only one obstacle at a time, first the sea, and then the land. In the *IT* Orestes must encounter the united opposition of sea and land together. At the same time, the world of the *IT*, like the cosmos in *Andromeda*, might also be viewed as a region with the potential to be made into a realm of divinely created order. In the explicit terms of the play, this will mean it can be converted from savagery to civilization, specifically Athenian Greek civilization.

And indeed, positive forces seem to inhabit the menacing world represented by the stage set: some of the herdsmen at first mistake Orestes and Pylades for sea-gods and behave in a reverent manner (267–274). The more cynical Taurians reject this identification of the strangers and attack them, yet there remains some kind of divine power that protects the two Greeks

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destructive power of the sea. See especially 206–211. He suggests the three may have been performed together in 412 BCE (ibid. 43–55).

27 For an airborn Perseus arriving at a landscape that is washed by the sea, see *Andromeda*, frr. 124–125 Kn.; Andromeda as "sea-monster food", frr. 115a, 122, 145 Kn.; Athena as *dea ex machina* Test. iiia Kn.

28 Eratosthenes *Cataster*., Epit. 36; also 22, 15, 17; Manilius *Astr*. 2.25–29; 5.538–618.

and prevents the herdsmen's missiles from harming them: "It was incredible (ἄπιστον)," says the herdsman (328–329). "None of our countless hands could hit the goddess's sacrificial victims with a throw."[29] At the end of the first episode, in a complex monologue (342–391), Iphigenia examines her own responses to sacrificing Greeks. Onstage with only the chorus and the bloodied altar, she rehearses in detail her horror at her own sacrifice at Aulis and contemplates the revenge she might take on Helen and Menelaus for whose cause she was sacrificed, "exchanging an Aulis here for the one there" (τὴν ἐνθάδ' Αὖλιν ἀντιθεῖσα τῆς ἐκεῖ, 358). But she finally rejects the concept of taking vengeance for her own sacrifice at Aulis, and concludes (385–391): "It is not possible that Leto the consort of Zeus gave birth to such enormous foolishness. I reckon the story of Tantalus' feast to be incredible (ἄπιστα): that eating his son's flesh was a pleasure for the gods. And I think that the people here, since they themselves are murderers, transfer their fault to the goddess. For I don't believe any of the gods is evil." In this scene the significations of the altar shift kaleidoscopically from immediate threat to Orestes to a double of the altar at Aulis, and back again, but with a difference at the end. At the beginning of the play, Iphigenia had been linked as the altar's priestess with its meanings and menace. By the end of Iphigenia's monologue the danger to Orestes is no less, but she herself has begun to create a schism between the practice of human sacrifice and its justification. From this point forward the altar begins to stand in opposition both to Atreid children and eventually even to the goddess to whom it is consecrated.[30]

This process of separating Iphigenia from the cult over which she presides is completed by the end of the recognition scene, when brother and sister have been reunited and the three Greeks resolve to attempt escape with Artemis' image. At this point Iphigenia abandons human sacrifice, of course, and she takes a further step (1017–1023):

> *Iph.* How can it happen so that we will not be killed
> and get what we want? That's where our return home
> is ailing, even though we have the will.
> *Or.* Maybe we could kill the king?
> *Iph.* That's a dreadful thing you've said, for strangers to murder their host!

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[29] Sansone (1975) 287 sees this sequence as a re-enactment of the sacrifice at Aulis, with cattle slaughtered in place of the intended victim rather than a deer.

[30] Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) 34, gives a slightly different perspective: "[Iphigenia's statement] distances the goddess Artemis from this particular cult, albeit without eliminating the connections, especially since the audience may have found Iphigenia's speculation convincing, but had no way of knowing whether it was right."

Or. But if it will save you, and me, we ought to risk it.
Iph. I could not do it. But I appreciate your zeal.

With this brief exchange, Iphigenia rejects the violence that has thus far characterized her family's dealings with the world, and turns Atreid drama in a new direction. She now rejects all that the altar has signified about her family history.

The image of Artemis that Iphigenia subsequently brings out of the temple has been referred to throughout the play by the words βρέτας and ἄγαλμα, and is once called a ξόανον (1359). Thoas says it sits inside the temple on an immovable base or foundation (βάθρα, 1157). It is agreed to have fallen into the temple from heaven (88–89, 986, 1384), an origin which puts it in the group of very old religious images, such as the legendary Palladion at Troy, the Omphalos at Delphi, the statues of Dionysos Kadmeios at Thebes, and of Artemis of Ephesos.[31] It was probably wooden (both βρέτας and ξόανον can suggest that), but in any case small and light enough to be carried by Iphigenia, who is the only person allowed to touch it (1044–1045).[32] Such objects may serve multiple functions: Faraone differentiates between talismans—images that by their mere presence protect a city or region, even if they are kept in an inner sanctum—and *apotropaia*, images placed openly on boundaries to frighten away evil-doers.[33] Artemis' statue seems to serve both these functions, hidden within its temple, but like its temple, an apotropaic presence on the border to protect the land from foreign invaders.[34]

Unlike the temple and altar that were present from the opening of the play, the cult statue makes a dramatic entry, and at once bears multiple, even contradictory, significations that have already been given to it in the course of the action. When in the prologue Orestes described the quest assigned him by Apollo, the image was for him a goal and a prize, an object like Jason's golden fleece, to be retrieved from the barbarians and returned to Greece.[35] It is also a cure, for if he succeeds he will be relieved of his sufferings (79–83). But when Iphigenia emerges from the temple with the image in her arms, she has taken

31 Cropp (2000) *ad* 87–88 and 1359. Burkert (1985) 91 and n. 84. On images fallen from heaven and the Palladion, see also Faraone (1992) 5, 7. The image is notable among the comparatively large number of props in this play. See Tordoff, this volume.

32 See representations in Roman art at *LIMC* ii/1 (1984), 965–969, 1019, 1029, 1040.

33 Faraone (1992) 4.

34 On temples of Artemis as shrines marking and defending borders and margins, see Buxton (1992) 211–212; and Cole (2000) 472–478.

35 Parallels between Orestes' journey and Jason's quest for the golden fleece are suggested by the repeated mention of the Symplegades and the choral reference to Orestes passing the "never-resting promontories of Phineus" where Jason met the Harpies (423–424).

over control of the quest and its object. By repeating the action that Artemis performed for her at Aulis, that is, by removing the goddess bodily from the temple and from the presence of human sacrifice, Iphigenia begins to fulfill the stated will of Apollo. The will of Artemis herself is nowhere expressed. Her image also represents the negative divine power that sits at the center of the hostile landscape, vividly represented by the threatening altar that is in full view. Hence there is a clash of significations and the destructive and creative potentials signified by the set and image of Artemis still stand unresolved and create a dramatic tension that was potentially very powerful for the original audience.

After the procession has left the stage, a second Taurian messenger reveals to King Thoas the success of Iphigenia's scheme. He twice points to, and thus foregrounds, the onstage altar to express his outrage at the theft of Iphigenia and the statue (1314, 1320). The Greeks escaped to their ship with the image and headed out to sea; but as they reached the open sea, a squall blew up, and the wind and waves drove the ship back to the shore and to the clutches of the waiting Taurian escort (1378–1410). Thoas is about to pursue the escaped Greeks with all his forces when Athena appears suddenly to save the Greeks' ship and the chorus who are in mortal danger for having aided the escapees, and to announce a newly forged connection between the Atreids and Athens. The image of Artemis, says Athena, is meant to go to the temple at Halae in Attica, and the rite established there shall include holding a sword to a man's throat and drawing blood in memory of the rite of human sacrifice. Iphigenia herself is to serve the cult of Artemis at Brauron, near Athens, where finally she will be buried and where the clothes of young women who died in childbirth will be brought as offerings.

Even sympathetic readings of *IT* can find that some of the events in the *exodos* lack dramatic motivation. The sudden squall and wave that send the Greek ship back to land occur as if by chance, suddenly, and without human action, and thereby reverse the action of the play one last time. The appearance of Athena to set things right is "unexpected" in a play that has so far had chiefly to do with Artemis and Apollo.[36] Our demonstration of the impulses that structure the play puts us in a better the position to assess this final series of events.

Let us begin with the squall. The Taurian messenger describes it to Thoas as follows (1391–1397):

[36] For the problem and possible justifications for Athena's entry, see Kyriakou (2006) *ad* 1435–1474. Cf. Cropp (2000) *ad* 1435–1489.

> But the ship, while it was within the harbor, proceeded to its mouth but, once it had emerged, it met a violent wave and was hard pressed. A terrible wind had arisen suddenly and was pushing the ship astern. But the sailors kept up their effort, futilely kicking against the wave while the inrushing surf carried the ship back to land.[37]

Scholarship has been unnecessarily puzzled about the source of the wind and wave.[38] The Taurian messenger gives Poseidon credit for returning the Greeks to shore, observing that "The lord of the sea, holy Poseidon, hostile to the Pelopids, watches out for Ilium, and now will grant you and your citizens to have the son of Agamemnon in your power, as it seems, and his sister, too, who has forgotten the attempt at murder in Aulis and is caught betraying the goddess" (1414–1419). Athena confirms that the same god has calmed the sea at her request (1444–1445). Poseidon's opposing wave (κλύδων) answers the "wave" of herdsmen that attacked Orestes and Pylades in the first messenger speech. It is thematically and dramatically right that, when the Taurian forces from the land fail to stop the Greeks, the ἄξεινος πόντος should rise to prevent their escape. The event finally assigns a name to the force that was active from the beginning. Iphigenia may tell Thoas that the seashore is the most appropriate place to purify the ξόανον and the matricidal Greek ("The sea washes away all of men's evils" 1193), but she is only partially correct. The sea remains ἄξεινος. The meeting of sea and land is still a place of extreme danger for the Greeks, for the region is a final battleground between the forces of chaos in the play, on the one hand, and Orestes and Iphigenia on the other, who represent the combined wills of Apollo and, as it emerges, of Athena.

Would the Athenians have been surprised that it was Athena who saves the day? Apollo and Artemis are more frequently invoked, and even maligned, by the human actors throughout the play as the proximate causes of the action. Given the free invention that Euripides was exercising, he may even have intended a surprise. On the other hand, Athena appears several times *ex machina* in plays that Euripides probably wrote during the same decade, settling Apollo's quarrels in the *Ion*, for example, and apparently also pronouncing the epilogues of the *Andromeda* and *Erechtheus*.[39] Looking

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37 Trans. Kovacs (1999).

38 Burnett (1971) 65–68 claims it is a natural accident, due only to *Tyche*, or Chance; Kyriakou (2006) 17–18 and *ad* 1391bff. appears to concur. On the role of *tyche* in the plays see also Cropp (2000) 37–38.

39 *Erechtheus*, fr. 370 Kn., lines 55–100. On the basis of metrical resolution, Cropp and Fick (1985) 78–80 date *Erechtheus* to after the Peace of Nicias, with a tentative preference for the years around 416 BC.

further back in dramatic history, she notably ends the *Oresteia*, the action of which is, as we have seen, paralleled in *IT*. In the *IT* itself Athena is mentioned briefly in Iphigenia's lament in the *parodos* (222), and by Orestes in his account of his stay and trial in Athens (960, 966). Kyriakou concludes that, "The prominence of Athens and especially religion in the play make the appearance of Athena as *dea ex machina* and the announcement of cults and aetiologies less surprising or unexpected than in other plays."[40]

The "prominence of Athens," is perhaps an overstatement, and the debate over the issue indicates that there remains a problem of dramatic preparation, at least as we (and Aristotle) might expect it. I would like finally to suggest, however, that Euripides employed, as elsewhere in the play, unstated associations between the visual and the suggested, and has anticipated Athena's entry by the way Iphigenia engineers the escape with the statue. Specifically, I want to argue that the ritual she invents for the cleansing of Artemis' image is based on historically documented Athenian rituals for purifying images of Athena, and so might lead a fifth-century Athenian audience to be less surprised at her appearance.

Iphigenia tells Thoas that Orestes' matricide has polluted the temple and the image and that to purify them she must take the statue and the two Greeks to a remote area of the seashore their heads covered and their hands bound (1204–1205). They are to be accompanied by Thoas' retinue, while Thoas himself covers his head with his cloak to protect himself from pollution, and the Taurian population is to remain indoors so as not to witness the event. A procession comes onstage from the temple doors that includes Orestes and Pylades bound and hooded, sacrificial lambs, men with lighted torches, and sacrificial equipment. Joined by Thoas's guards, they make an impressive parade consisting of at least eight people, the animals, sacrificial equipment and lighted torches.[41]

The details of Iphigenia's pseudo-ritual, like so much else in this play, are made up of disparate elements from multiple sources. The act of covering the face seem to have had a parallel in at least one Artemis cult from Achaean Pellene.[42] The Plynteria, the annual festival during which the statue of Athena Polias was washed and given new clothes by Athenian virgins and matrons, may also be referenced, given that Artemis's clothes are included as part of the procession to the shore (1223). Most interestingly, however, the rite in *IT* has

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40 Kyriakou (2006) 24. But see also note 36 above.
41 Cropp (2000) 56; Kyriakou (2006) 39.
42 Faraone (1992) 138, citing Plut. *Arat.* 32.

significant elements in common with a rite enacted yearly in Athens to purify the Palladion, an ancient statue of Athena that resided in the precinct of the Palladion court.[43] This was thought to be the Palladion stolen by Odysseus and Diomedes from Troy and like the statue in *IT*, also fallen from heaven. It came to reside in Athens because, according to the local myth, Diomedes' ships landed by night at the Athenian port of Phaleron on their way back to Argos. Mistaking the Argive fleet for enemies, the Athenians attacked them, killing many and capturing the Palladion. On discovering their mistake, the Athenian king Demophon took the image to the sea where it had been captured in order to purify it. It was subsequently set it up at a court founded to be competent in cases of unpremeditated homicide and violence against slaves and foreigners. Punishment for conviction was banishment, which was revocable after purification.[44] Annually the image was taken back to the shore in a cart, escorted by a group of young soldiers bearing torches, to the site of the original battle and purified in the sea. An inscription describes the ceremony: "They [the young soldiers] escorted the Pallas statue to Phaleron and from there escorted it back again, with torchlight and all pomp and ceremony."[45] Given the public nature of this procession from Athens to Phaleron, and given the fact that it was accompanied by ephebes, it is quite likely that at some portion of the audience had actually taken part in it. There are also thematic similarities between the Palladion rite and the plot of the *IT*. The battle in which the Athenians captured the Palladion took place at the Attic seashore, as the battle for Artemis' image took place on the Taurian coast. The convicts of the Palladion court, like Orestes in the *IT*, are banished, but may return when their wandering is finished. Therefore, although the dramatic rite in *IT* is meant to appease Artemis, an Athenian playwright or audience, consciously or subconsciously, could associate significant details in the *IT* with the Palladion ritual. Wolff explains that in the *IT*, "The play … of deceptive contrivance and 'real' effect involved with ritual material, runs parallel to the way the drama itself may be seen to work: as a fictional construction … that produces meanings that are symbolically or psychologically 'true,' that engage in some way the audience's sense of reality."[46] Without trying to

[43] The similarity of the rite in *IT* to the Athenian Palladium ritual and (perhaps) the Plynteria was observed by Wolff (1992) 317 and n. 25.

[44] Burkert (1985) 79 and n. 43. Like many religious objects over the centuries, the Trojan Palladion was claimed by multiple cities: Faraone (1992) 7.

[45] *IG* II/III^2 1006, 11. Burkert (1970) 357 and n. 6.

[46] Wolff (1992) 317–318.

guess what Euripides consciously intended, I would propose that the close connections between the real and the fictional rituals result in dramatic preparation for the theophany of Athena at the end.[47]

To conclude *IT* with a ritual similar to one associated with an Athenian murder court is to create yet another parallel to the *Oresteia* and its celebration of the Areopagus court. But the parallel is introduced only to be undercut. In the *Oresteia*, resolution is achieved by trial and exoneration for violent acts already performed. In *IT* a new dramatic world is achieved by Orestes and Iphigenia because they break the old pattern of murder and retribution by avoiding violent acts altogether: Iphigenia does not kill Orestes, nor does Orestes kill Thoas; even the battle at the shore takes place between oddly unarmed troops. The children of Agamemnon create new order and a new narrative for their family.[48]

The action of the *IT* recreates what Eliade calls "that time" (*illud tempus*)—an original moment of creation in which the world is formed out of chaos. As in the *Andromeda*, the powers of the sea and land that represent primal chaos and death have been conquered. "Our world" is created, with its abolition of human sacrifice symbolized by the evacuation of the statue of Artemis from her temple, and replaced by the rites at Brauron and Halae. Thoas in his final speech, addressed to the goddess Athena, acknowledges the power of Artemis's departed image as a now-changed signifier of this new order: "Let them go to your land with the goddess' statue (ἄγαλμ'), and may they dedicate the image (βρέτας) there with good fortune!"

Significantly, this cosmic shift takes place not at Artemis' temple and altar, stained by human sacrifice and emblematic of chaos; the new world is established at a more powerful center, the border where the primal elements of sea and land conjoin. The temple and altar that remain are now permanently separated from their cult statue and priestess, and soon even of its chorus of captive Greek maidens who served the cult (1467–1469, 1482–1483). Iphigenia had rejected violence at the human level. At the divine level, Athena also rejects force and performs an act of creation, calming chaos and establishing the new order through the civilizing medium of her natural influence (χάρις, 1444) with Poseidon. She resolves the sense of fragmentation and hurt signified by the first words and images of the play. The rituals at Halai and Brauron, in which Iphigenia and the ξόανον feature, whether actual

47 Euripides seems to have made a similar move elsewhere. For an argument that the Argive festival of Hera similarly provides an unstated thematic structure and ironic counterpoint to Euripides *Electra*, see Zeitlin (1970).

48 Cf. Sansone (1975) 292–295.

or invented, encapsulate the story's ending on the levels of both genre and myth. They celebrate the successful completion of Orestes' quest, for they enshrine the objects of that quest, the statue of Artemis and the person of Iphigenia, in their new and civilized Greek homes, purified of the horror of the onstage altar.

And yet, the altar with its streams of blood and "top pickings" is still onstage at the end as it was in the beginning, even as the actors and chorus make their exits. Sansone has suggested that "while the play presents one stage in the evolution from barbarism to civilization, [Euripides] does not want us to imagine that that evolution is in any sense complete, that the Greeks have successfully purged themselves of all their former barbarism."[49] Foley observes that "the past and the present are reconnected through [the new] ritual [in Greece], a ritual that must ultimately be continually reenacted (like myths in drama) as a means of recapturing the crucial memory of the original violent event."[50] The altar may make just these points, for though it has been voided of its power in the dramatic present, the history it has represented, Tantalid and Taurian, remains a reality in the world of the play.[51] For those in the audience less inclined to accept happy endings, it may be an ironic reminder of the sordid path that led to the creation of the "new world" and in consequence always a part of that world's present.

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49 Sansone (1975) 295.

50 Foley (1985) 100; and cf 58 and 64.

51 Compare Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) 38, who accepts the cultic connections as historically real and believes that the connection established by the play "allow certain dark aspects of Athenian cult to be articulated, problematized, and explored at a safe symbolic distance."

STAGING *RHESUS*[*]

Vayos Liapis

"There is no denying", Eduard Fraenkel wrote, "that the author [of *Rhesus*] was a highly gifted man of the theatre."[1] Indeed, *Rhesus* is extremely interesting from a visual point of view, despite faults in stagecraft and plot-construction. Its author had an evident taste for the spectacular and the novel,[2] even sometimes at the price of dramaturgical consistency. In what follows, I shall first single out instances exemplifying the author's dramaturgical skills and/or his taste for visual extravagance. Subsequently, I shall discuss cases in which he seems to have been overwhelmed by his own excessively ambitious designs.

Rhesus' Chariot-Entry and Rhesus*' Archaisms*

In *Rh.* 380–387 the anapaests announce, as usual, a new character's entry, here Rhesus' arrival.[3] In Euripides, as in Sophocles, characters entering directly after a strophic chorus are typically unannounced, unless they are part of a "moving tableau".[4] That Rhesus' entrance *is* announced here underlines its remarkable nature,[5] which was in all likelihood visually manifested as a spectacular chariot procession, as Taplin ((1977b) 77) has suggested.[6] There is admittedly no mention of a chariot, but the shepherd's amazed description

[*] I am grateful to Oxford University Press, and to Hilary O'Shea in particular, for permission to use here material that also appears in my commentary on *Rhesus* (OUP 2012). Thanks are due to Almut Fries, George W.M. Harrison, Toph Marshall and Antonis Petrides, as well as to an anonymous reader for Brill, whose criticisms improved the argument in various ways. I am responsible both for the use I have made of their advice and for any errors that may remain.

[1] Fraenkel (1965) 239: 'Aber es ist auch nicht zu leugnen daß der Verfasser ein sehr begabter Theatermann war'.

[2] Cf. Burnett (1985) 13, partly anticipated by Grube (1941) 439; see also Poe (2004) 25, 32.

[3] Cf. Taplin (1977b) 70–77, esp. 73.

[4] See Hamilton (1978) 70; cf. Taplin (1972) 84; for the term "moving tableaux" see Hourmouziades (1965) 141.

[5] Cf. Hamilton (1978) 72.

[6] *Contra* Wilamowitz (1926) 286–287 = (1962) 414.

of Rhesus' arrival (*Rh.* 301–308) has led us to expect a sighting of the splendid vehicle; moreover, a chariot entrance would allow us to get a glimpse of the famous horses which will come into prominence later in the drama (*Rh.* 623–624, 671, 797–798, 835–840). Chariot entries, which may have been commonplace in the early theatre, are lacking in Sophocles and rare in Euripides,[7] but as Taplin (*l.c.*) argues they may well have become popular again in the fourth century. In *Rhesus*, which is rife with reminiscences of classical tragedy, the chariot scene may be harking back to Aeschylus' *Persians*, where (as becomes clear from lines 607–609 of that play) the first entry of the Persian Queen "was made ceremonially in a vehicle";[8] or this could be a visual reminiscence of *Agamemnon*, where the returning king entered on a chariot (cf. 906 ἔκβαιν' ἀπήνης τῆσδε). It must be admitted, however, that the above considerations are not compelling. Apart from the fact that, as already mentioned, it is never made explicit that Rhesus actually enters on a chariot, one might argue that the shepherd's detailed description of it could serve as "a substitute for any attempt at staging".[9] And it is perhaps significant that at *Rh.* 383–384, when Rhesus is about to appear onstage, the fearsome bells are transferred from Rhesus' horse trappings (which is where they had been in the shepherd's narrative, *Rh.* 306–308) to his shield's πόρπακες.[10]

There are further instances of archaic elements related to the performance of *Rhesus*. For instance, it appears that the play has no use for the *skēnē*-building. Most critics have assumed that the "*scaenae frons*" (assuming that there was such a thing) represents Hector's tent, as is the case in Sophocles' *Ajax*. However, as was pointed out already by Morstadt ((1827) 6 n. 1), the term describing the place where Hector or the Trojans sleep is never σκηνή, 'tent', but an unspecific εὐναί (χάμευναι) or κοῖται.[11] By contrast, the Greeks, who

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7 Taplin (1977b) 76 recognizes only two chariot-entries in E.: *El.* 988 (cf. 998–999 ἔκβητ' ἀπήνης ... ἵν' ἔξω τοῦδ' ὄχου στήσω πόδα) and *Tro.* 569 (ξενικοῖς ἐπ' ὄχοις πορθμευομένην), 572 (ποῖ ποτ' ἀπήνης νώτοισι φέρῃ). In *IA* 590 ff. Clytemnestra and Iphigenia enter on a chariot (cf. e.g. 599–600 τὴν βασίλειαν δεξώμεθ' ὄχων | ἄπο, 610–611 ὀχημάτων | ἔξω πορεύεθ' ἃς φέρω φερνάς, 613 λεῖπε πωλικοὺς ὄχους etc.), but the passage is interpolated.

8 Quotation from Taplin (1977b) 75; on the Queen's chariot-entry see also Garvie on A. *Pers.* 163–164; cf. further Podlecki, this volume. As A. Petrides points out to me, Roman tragedy also seems to have delighted in grand processions, to judge from Cic. *Fam.* 7.1 with reference to Accius' *Clytaemnestra* and Livius' or Naevius' (?) *Equus Troianus*.

9 Quotation from Taplin (1977b) 201.

10 I owe this point to Almut Fries.

11 Cf. 1, 9, 14, 22–24, 88, 574–576, 606, 631, 660, and note that in A. *Ag.* 559–562 the Greek εὐναί are in the open field. See further Wilamowitz (1926) 286 = (1962) 413; Björck (1957) 13–14; Taplin (1977b) 455 with n. 3; Jouan (2004) lvii.

have a permanent camp rather than a bivouac, lodge in "tents" or "huts" (45, 61 σκηναί, 255 κλισίαι). After all, there would be little use for a *skēnē* in a play where all entrances and exits, Hector's included, are evidently made by the side-entrances, never by the *skēnē* door (see below on exits and entrances). As has been remarked, "the entire play [...] demands that there be no barrier between actors and chorus",[12] and it is a reasonable assumption that the entire action takes place in the orchestra. Parallels for such a configuration are found only in Aeschylus (*Persians*, *Seven*, *Suppliant Women*, and the spurious *Prometheus Bound*), never in Sophocles or Euripides.[13]

Another example of *Rhesus*' revival of earlier theatrical practices is the anapaestic opening by the chorus, which is consistent both with Aeschylean practice, e.g. in *Persians* and *Suppliant Women*,[14] and with the style of Euripides' early choral entrance-songs.[15] Finally, Hector's (rather dull) role as the stationary recipient of a series of messenger narratives[16] may be seen as yet another nod to archaism: one is reminded of Eteocles in Aeschylus' *Seven*, likewise the rather static recipient of a series of reports.

Constructing Theatrical Space

The "gifted man of the theatre" (see p. 235 above) who wrote *Rhesus* shows considerable skill in constructing theatrical space and in outlining the play's imaginary topography. This has been demonstrated in particular by David Wiles and especially by Luigi Battezzato,[17] on whose remarks I have partly drawn for what follows. One of the side-entrances, which we shall call *eisodos* A (it may have been to the audience's right, but this is impossible to

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12 Quotation from Pickard (1893) 273.

13 See Taplin (1977b) 452–459, esp. 455; on A. *Su.* in particular see Friis-Johansen and Whittle (1980) i. *ad* 1 ff.

14 On the anapaestic choral opening as an instance of deliberate archaism cf. Kranz (1933) 263–264, 19–20.

15 Cf. Ritchie (1964) 341–344. It should be noted, however, that the chorus' anapaests soon evolve into an alternating structure, as they are balanced by Hector's iambic responses; and this alternation between anapaests and iambics is most closely paralleled in the heavily interpolated prologue of *Iphigeneia in Aulis* (1–48, 115–162); on the *Iphigeneia* prologue having been interpolated in (among else) the fourth century BC see Kovacs (2003) 80–83.

16 Hector's sleeping-place is the visual centre of the action; it is to him that the chorus, as well as several characters (Aeneas, the shepherd, Alexander, Rhesus' charioteer), address questions or report the night's events; it is he who is initially the target of Odysseus' and Diomedes' murderous attentions; it is to him, naturally, that Rhesus presents himself; see Strohm (1959) 266, 269.

17 Wiles (1997) 156; Battezzato (2000), esp. 367–368; cf. Albini (1993) 81.

determine), was supposed to lead off to the Trojan camp, and also at some further distance to the Greek camp. The opposite side-entrance, which we shall call *eisodos* B (perhaps to the audience's left), was imagined to lead off to the area surrounding Mt Ida, to the city of Troy, and to the future bivouac of Rhesus' Thracian army.[18] It will be useful to reproduce here Battezzato's convenient scheme of *Rhesus*' spatial arrangement (somewhat adapted for clarity and completeness):[19]

Mt Ida/Troy/Thracian bivouac	STAGE	Trojan camp/Greek camp
(*Eisodos* B)	(Hector's εὐναί)	(*Eisodos* A)

The rationale behind this reconstruction is, briefly, as follows. The play emphasizes that Rhesus' quarters are separate from the rest of the Trojan army (*Rh.* 518–520, 613–615), which suggests that the Thracian bivouac must be accessible through a different *eisodos* from the Trojan one, so that the separateness (cf. 520 δίχα) of Rhesus' bivouac may be rendered visually in no uncertain terms. This arrangement is strongly favoured by two additional considerations. Firstly, in 627–637 Odysseus and Diomedes, who are setting out to murder Rhesus, must leave the acting area through a different *eisodos* from the one leading to the Trojan camp, since the latter must be reserved for Alexander's imminent entrance (Alexander must be kept in the dark about the two Greeks' murderous mission, cf. 640–641, and so the two parties cannot be allowed to run into each other). Secondly, Rhesus is said to have arrived through the glades of Mt Ida in order to avoid an encounter with the Greek army (*Rh.* 282–286), and so he cannot have used the *eisodos* leading to the Greek camp. It follows that both Mt Ida and Rhesus' bivouac are imagined as being on the same side of the acting area, and thus as being accessible through the same *eisodos*.

As for the location of the Trojan camp, it is beyond doubt between the Greek encampment and the Thracian bivouac, since it is repeatedly stressed that the Greek spies could only have reached the Thracians by

[18] The term *eisodos* (plur. *eisodoi*) rather than *parodos*/*-oi* will be used throughout to designate the theatre's side-entrances: see Taplin (1977b) 449. It used to be generally assumed, on the dubious authority of Pollux 4. 126–127 (*Lex. Gr.* ix/1. 239 Bethe), that the *eisodoi* were imagined to lead to specific off-stage localities, identified *a priori* as "the countryside" or "the port" or "the city" etc. However, it has been convincingly argued by Hourmouziades (1965) 128–136 that the spatial directions represented by each *eisodos* were not fixed by an *a priori* convention but had to be determined anew for, and by, each play. Cf. also Taplin (1977b) 450–451; *contra*, however, Wiles (1997) 133–160 *passim*. See further Intro, pp. 3, 14.

[19] Cf. Battezzato (2000) 368.

passing through the Trojan camp (696–698, 808–813, and esp. 843–846).[20] This explains why the Trojan guards—who must be positioned at some distance from the Trojan bivouac and closer to the Greek camp, so that they may adequately survey the latter—cannot help causing a commotion among the allied army when rushing to Hector's εὐναί (cf. 18, 89, 138–139).[21] The arrangement suggested here also explains why the Greek marauders fear that they may at any moment run into some Trojan guard (565–573): they are crossing the Trojan camp. It must therefore be assumed that the same *eisodos* will have led both to the Trojan and to the Greek camp, despite the fact that this, admittedly, obscures the antithesis "Trojan vs. Greek", which is otherwise very clear-cut in the play. The only alternative arrangement available, namely having each of the two *eisodoi* lead to one of the two enemy camps, would entail the improbability of having Diomedes, who is heading for the Thracian bivouac, sneak out at 636–637 through the same *eisodos* as the one Alexander, who is coming from the Trojan camp, uses in 642. Since Alexander's imminent approach had been announced already at 627, it seems unavoidable that on this arrangement the two characters should, impossibly, meet.

As an addition to Battezzato's scheme, I point out that the place where Hector is spending the night (indicated as "Hector's εὐναί" in the scheme above) is apparently imagined as being closer to the Thracian bivouac than to the Trojan one. Athena informs the Greek scouts that Rhesus is resting "nearby" (613 ἐγγύς), i.e. near Hector's κοῖται (575–576), adding as we have already seen that the Thracian bivouac is at a considerable distance from the rest of the Trojan army (613 κοὐ συνήθροισται στρατῷ). By contrast, if Rhesus' thunderous arrival (308, 383–384) does not seem to bother the sleeping allies,[22] it is undoubtedly because the Thracian follows a route that is sufficiently removed from the Trojan camp to prevent aural contact.

Exits and Entrances; the Movements of Chorus and Actors

The two *eisodoi* are an integral part of the play's "imaginary topography"—of the mapping-out of its fictional dimensions in space. The *eisodoi* function as visual markers, signposting and articulating theatrical space. It is against this spatial backdrop that actors' exits and entrances are played out.

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[20] Cf. already Hartung (1843) 40; see further Battezzato (2000) 368.

[21] As Battezzato (2000) 368 n. 9 points out, lines 138–139 imply that the Trojan allies (and, presumably, the Trojans themselves) are all in the same place.

[22] Cf. Morstadt (1827) 12 n. 1, 30–31.

According to Batttezzato's scheme outlined above (p. 238), *eisodos* A will have been used for the entrances of the chorus (1ff.), Aeneas (87ff.), Odysseus and Diomedes (565ff.), and Alexander (642ff.). Further, this same *eisodos* must be used for Aeneas' exit at 148 (he goes to calm the upset allies), for Alexander's exit at 664 (he goes back to the Trojan camp),[23] and also for the chorus' exit halfway through the play (they are going to wake the Lycians, 562–564, who will naturally be encamped together with the Trojans and their allies). For their re-entrance (675–691), the chorus must probably use *eisodos* A again, which means that Odysseus too will have to use the same *eisodos*,[24] since he is pursued by the chorus, who must have intercepted him on his way back to the Greek camp. Admittedly, Odysseus, having just accomplished his mission to kill Rhesus, must be coming from the Thracian bivouac, and so must re-enter by *eisodos* B. But it is inconceivable that the re-entering chorus used any other *eisodos* except A. True, one may surmise that, as the Trojans got wind of suspicious activity at the Thracian bivouac (cf. 671–672), the chorus of Trojan guards—without having the time to wake the Lycians, cf. 543–545, 562–564—went there to check if something was wrong, and so naturally re-entered by *eisodos* B. But it is odd that there is never as much as hint at this rather substantial detour of the chorus. When all is said and done, it seems preferable to assume that Odysseus, pursued by the chorus, is imagined as coming not from the Thracian bivouac but from the general direction of the Greek camp. Indeed, this would be consistent with Athena's advice that the Greek spies should hurry back to their camp immediately after Rhesus' murder (673). If Odysseus is imagined as being already on his way back to the Greek camp at 674, then it would be only natural for him to re-enter through *eisodos A*: by that time, one must assume, he would be in the environs of the Trojan camp.[25]

Eisodos B must be used for Dolon's exit before he ventures out to the Greek camp, when he declares he will first go to his house in Troy to disguise himself as a wolf (202–204): one may reasonably assume that the city of Troy is imagined as being topographically distinct from the Greek (as well as the Trojan) camp. The same *eisodos* B will have been used for the entrances of the shepherd-messenger (264ff.), who has his make-do lodgings in Mt Ida (287–288), and of Rhesus who has arrived through Mt. Ida (380ff., cf. p. 238

[23] See Battezzato (2000) 369.

[24] Thus Burnett (1985) 41; *contra* Battezzato (2000) 369.

[25] That this would probably be impossible in "real time" is irrelevant, for dramatic time can be condensed at will; see p. 248 with n. 65 below.

above). Athena, too, should probably use *eisodos* B for her entrance: since as we saw Odysseus and Diomedes enter by *eisodos* A, the goddess must appear through *eisodos* B in order to intercept them. This is after all the *eisodos* she will have to use if she is imagined as coming from Mt. Ida, whence one assumes she would have a vantage view over the Trojan plain (as Zeus does in *Iliad* 8. 47). Her entrance by *eisodos* B also allows her to see Alexander coming (627): she is facing *eisodos* A. By contrast, Diomedes has his back to *eisodos* A by which he entered (565 ff.), and so presumably cannot see Alexander (630).[26]

Moreover, it is through this same *eisodos* B that Rhesus' charioteer will enter to report his master's death (728 ff.), and will be later carried off (877–888) to the Trojan palace (872, 877). Odysseus and Diomedes will also exit by *eisodos* B to murder Rhesus (Odysseus at 626, Diomedes at 636), although as we saw it may be preferable to assume that Odysseus will re-enter (with the chorus hard on his heels) by *eisodos* A. Further, Hector and Rhesus, together with the latter's retinue, will use *eisodos* B to exit at 526, since they are heading for the Thracians' bivouac. Finally, Hector's re-entrance at 808 ff. is a puzzle: it is impossible to determine whether he used *eisodos* B or not, since his whereabouts after showing Rhesus and his Thracians to their bivouac are never specified (cf. p. 249 below).

A word is needed on Athena's epiphany at *Rh.* 595. I consider it probable that she appeared at ground level, rather than *ex machina*: one may compare e.g. Apollo in *Alcestis*, Hermes in *Ion*, Dionysus in *Bacchae*, and most probably Athena herself in *Ajax*.[27] If she is convincingly to pretend she is Alexander's patron goddess (646 ff.), it seems preferable to have her maintain a semblance of intimacy by being on the same level with her protégé. The idea of an appearance on the *skēnē*-roof[28] is rendered unlikely by the fact that the *skēnē*-building is, as we have seen, otherwise unexploited in *Rhesus*. That Odysseus recognizes the goddess from her *voice* (608–609) by no means implies that she remains invisible, and thus removed from stage-level.[29] For as Heath remarks ((1987) 165), "the emphasis on non-visual means of recognition is a

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[26] Mastronarde's hypothesis ((1990) 275) that Athena entered "through an auxiliary door concealed behind painted shrubbery" seems unnecessary. For Athena's appearance at ground level rather than on high see further the next-but-one paragraph.

[27] Thus Heath (1987) 165–166; *contra* Mastronarde (1990) 278.

[28] As advocated by e.g. Morstadt (1827) 29 n. 1; Wilamowitz (1926) 287 = (1962) 414; Ritchie (1964) 120–123; Bond (1996) 269.

[29] Despite e.g. Paley (1872) ad loc., Taplin (1977b) 366 n. 1, Pöhlmann (1989) 54, Burlando (1997) 81–83, and Feickert (2005) on 608.

conventional motif when a god is identified by a mortal intimate to whom no explicit profession of identity has been made". Elsewhere, invisible gods are *explicitly* identified as such: cf. *Hippolytus* 86 κλύων μὲν αὐδῆς, ὄμμα δ' οὐχ ὁρῶν τὸ σόν; and in *Ajax* 15 Athena is termed ἄποπτος.[30] Athena's never explicitly identifying herself has an early parallel in Apollo's entrance in *Eumenides* 64 ff.[31]

Dolon's Entrance

The discussion of exits and entrances in *Rhesus* calls for a comment on Dolon's entrance (*Rh.* 154), which is not clearly signposted in the play. The question is: has the actor playing Dolon been there all along, presumably as part of Hector's retinue (cf. *Rh.* 2–3), or is he entering only now? The former is likelier: Hector's invitation has been explicitly extended to 'the present company' (*Rh.* 149),[32] and it would be odd to have Dolon enter just in time to hear the proclamation. Some scholars[33] complain that having an important dramatic agent such as Dolon (as opposed to servants or mere companions) remain onstage for more than 150 lines without identifying himself and without speaking or being spoken to would be unparalleled in extant tragedy.[34] This is misguided: in *Alcestis* 233–393 Alcestis' son takes 160 lines to identify himself (though admittedly the boy actor playing this part would have left little doubt as to his identity); in Aeschylus' *Suppliants* Danaus' identification is delayed until 176, although it is conceivable that his entry was arranged to coincide with the chorus' mention of his name in 11;[35] and in *Agamemnon* 810 ff. Cassandra remains notoriously silent for 140 lines before she is even referred to (950), another 85 lines before she is identified (1035), and another 37 before she speaks (1072). Dolon's long silence is surely calculated for surprise effect: out of a seemingly desperate situation (nobody has the courage to accept the dangerous mission, cf. *Rh.* 149–153) there springs

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30 For a more sceptical view see Mastronarde (1990) 274–275.

31 Cf. Heath (1987) 166 n. 2.

32 οἳ πάρεισιν ἐν λόγῳ is "those present at this announcement", not "those who are within hearing of my words" (despite Ritchie (1964) 115); cf. Ar. *Av.* 30, *Ach.* 513 (with Dunbar, Olson ad locc.). In *Il.* 10. 299–312 Hector makes a similar proclamation, likewise prefacing his speech with a question addressed to all those present.

33 e.g. Ritchie (1964) 113–115; Poe (2004) 26.

34 Cf. also Burnett (1985) 20, who sees in Dolon's "materializing" unannounced out of nowhere a sign of his supposed insignificance.

35 See Sandin (2005) on 1–39.

forth, at long last, a potential saviour. There is an interesting parallel for such an arrangement in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (5.1.152–153), where an otherwise unidentified Goth, of whom there has been no mention in the entire scene, speaks two lines towards its end, probably coming forward from the group of Goths already accompanying Lucius.[36]

The alternative suggested by Ritchie ((1964) 114) involves having Dolon hear Hector's proclamation from off stage and enter, unannounced, in order to respond to it (so also, essentially, Poe (2004) 26–27). This, however, is untenable. Firstly, Hector cannot be so desperate as to issue a plea for help throughout the Trojan camp, which would cause the allies' morale, already at a low ebb, to sink even further (cf. *Rh.* 138–139 "I expect the army will be in commotion, having heard of this nightly council"); Ritchie's parallel of Soph. fr. 314. 39–40 Radt is thus specious. Secondly, whenever a character, unannounced and unsummoned, enters in response to stage business,[37] he clearly identifies both himself and the reason for his entry;[38] Dolon does nothing of the sort here. Moreover, as Poe (2004) 27 is aware, Dolon, if entering by one of the *eisodoi*, would have to cover a considerable distance in order to walk up to Hector, in which case his arrival would have to be explicitly announced, so that the pause required for the actor to reach the acting area could be acknowledged and accounted for. And as we have seen (despite Ritchie (1964) 115), there is no functional *skēnē*-building for Dolon to appear from.

Stagecraft Virtuosity

As intimated above, the author of *Rhesus* seeks to impress by introducing spectacular stagecraft novelties. This is especially evident in what is perhaps the play's most salient feature: its night-time action. Like several Greek tragedies,[39] *Rhesus* begins before dawn; but unlike any other known Greek drama, it unfolds almost entirely in the darkness of night.[40] Since the play

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36 See Bate (1995) ad loc.

37 Cf. ?A. *PV* 284 with Griffith p. 13, 140; E. *Hcld.* 474 ff. with Wilkins.

38 On "surprise entrances" in tragedy see further Halleran (1985) 34–40.

39 Cf. e.g. Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*; Sophocles' *Antigone* and *Trachiniae*; Euripides' *Electra, Hecabe, Ion, Iphigeneia in Aulis, Phaethon, Andromeda*; cf. Ritchie (1964) 136; Diggle on *Phaeth.* 63; Walton (2000) 138.

40 Sophocles' *Laconian Women* (Λάκαιναι, fr. 367–369a Radt) has been adduced as a possible parallel by Ritchie (1964) 136–137 (cf. Walton (2000) 138), since it *may* have dramatized the nocturnal theft of the Palladium. But that play may just as well have been concerned with

was mounted on an open-air stage in broad daylight, there would have been no question of "realistically" representing the darkness on stage: it is rather through verbal indications that the nocturnal setting is conveyed to the audience. The impression of surrounding darkness is carefully insinuated already at the outset (e.g. *Rh.* 1, 2, 5, 8–9, 13, 25, 42), sustained throughout the play (e.g. 55, 66, 111, 223, 289, 331, 518, 528–555, 570–571, 615, 678–679, 697, 736, 774, 824), and dispelled only in the last twenty lines, in which the imminent coming of the morning is heralded (984–985, 991–992).[41]

The author's keenness to dazzle the audience with innovative spectacle is further evidenced in what is perhaps the play's most "action-packed" section, namely lines 565–674.[42] To begin with, the actors in this section move in and out of stage at almost breakneck speed, at least by the standards of extant Greek tragedy. Exits and / or entrances, including the chorus' own, occur every 25–30 lines approximately (see *Rh.* 564, 595, 626, 637, 642, 664), a pace quite unparalleled in extant Greek tragic drama. Even more impressively, this thick-and-fast succession of exits and entrances leads to a chaotic scene in which the chorus charge into the orchestra in hot pursuit of a fleeing Odysseus (675 ff.). This must have been visually arresting, as well as fraught with unmistakable comic nuances; especially the repeated injunctions "strike, strike, strike [him] batter, batter, batter [him]," with their threat of impending stage violence, recall Aristophanes' *Acharnians* 281–283.[43]

Another impressive piece of stagecraft must have been the momentarily empty stage just before Odysseus' and Diomedes' entrance at 565. The chorus, on their way to wake the Lycians, the next watch of the night (543–545, 562–564), will have left the orchestra in the direction of the Trojan/allied camp. As we saw above (p. 238), both the Trojan and the Greek camps are supposed to be situated on the same side of the playing area, and so the chorus will have to use the same *eisodos* as the entering Greeks (*eisodos* A:

Odysseus' entry into Troy in a beggar's disguise (see Radt's apparatus, *TrGF* IV p. 328); in which case no nocturnal setting would have been necessary. Sophocles' *Nauplios Pyrkaeus* is also another possible night-time play—although for all we know it may have dramatized the *aftermath* of Nauplios' actions (cf. Sophocles' *Ajax*) rather than enacting or narrating them in "real time".

41 See further Compagno (1963/4) 249–256; Ragone (1969) 85; Ritchie (1964) 135–137; Pöhlmann (1989) 55; Burlando (1997) 11–16; Jouan (2004) xxxviii–xl; and especially Fantuzzi (1990) 26–27, who points out that maintaining a theatrical fiction of darkness in a theatre bathed in sunlight must have required an unusual effort by the audience, who should have been alert enough to pick up the verbal hints, and even by the actors, who would have had persuasively to deliver such an "anti-realistic" piece of theatre (cf. also Harsh (1944) 252).

42 Cf. Ragone (1969) 82.

43 Cf. Poe (2004) 24.

see p. 240 above). As a result, the stage will remain momentarily empty to prevent the two parties from walking into each other. The hiatus thus created may strike some as clumsy,[44] but it can actually be a very effective means of accentuating the critical moment when the time bomb that will lead to the play's catastrophe starts ticking: after a brief spell of emptiness, silence, and immobility, we watch the two Greeks sneak into the orchestra. Anyone remotely familiar with *Iliad* 10 will instantly realize that these are Rhesus' future murderers, since one of them is immediately identified as Diomedes. The closest parallel to this—although admittedly it does not involve a chorus' departure—is probably Aeschylus' *Eumenides* 33, where the Pythia enters the Delphic temple only to come out again after a brief interval, crawling on all fours. That scene, like the *Rhesus* scene under discussion, is all the more stunning for the empty stage that precedes it.[45] A performance space, to quote Peter Brook's famous formulation, is by definition an "empty space" waiting to be filled with visual and aural stimuli.[46] A theatre stage that is empty of motion and sound is bound to produce an unsettling effect.

However, this remarkable scene proves, on closer inspection, to be problematic. Choral exits of this sort[47] are always theatrically expedient in tragedy.[48] Consider, for instance, Aeschylus' *Eumenides* 231 (change of scene from Delphi to Athens, 235 ff.); Sophocles' *Ajax* 814 (Ajax's suicide must take place in an otherwise empty stage, 815 ff.); Euripides' *Helen* 385 (Menelaus' entrance monologue in 386 ff., in which he identifies himself, must not be heard by anyone else); *Alcestis* 746 (the chorus would not have allowed the news of Alcestis' death to be broken to Heracles).[49] In the case of *Rhesus*,

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44 Cf. e.g. Battezzato (2000) 368–369 with n. 13; Kovacs (2002) 410 n. 16. A seemingly plausible alternative was proposed by Wiles (1997) 156: Odysseus and Diomedes enter before the chorus' departure but remain invisible by hiding behind some obstacle. However, this is an impossibility: if the two Greeks had overheard the Trojan guards and/or witnessed their departure, then Odysseus would neither advise Diomedes to "watch out in case there are any guards around" (*Rh.* 570) nor express surprise at the realization that the Trojan bivouac is empty (574, 577).

45 Cf. Taplin (1977b) 362–363; Sommerstein on A. *Eu.* 33. For the empty stage in New Comedy see Belardinelli (1990).

46 Cf. Brook (1968) 11: "I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged. Yet when we talk about theatre this is not quite what we mean."

47 The ancient technical term is μετάστασις χοροῦ, cf. Pollux 4.108 (*Lexicographi Graeci* ix.1, 233.11 Bethe).

48 Cf. Ritchie (1964) 118–120; Burlando (1997) 44–45.

49 Ritchie (1964) 118–119 adds E. *Phaeth.* 226 Diggle = fr. 781.13 Kannicht to the list of middrama choral exits; but see Diggle (1970) 150 with n. 2.

however, theatrical expediency comes at the rather dear price of an exit motivated by a somewhat tenuous pretext (the chorus need to wake up the next watch, but in real life this should have been done by one or two watchmen only, not by the entire guard), which moreover turns out to be false, since the change of guard never actually takes place.[50]

The Stagecraft of Rhesus*: Oddities and Failures*

The double-edged effect of the empty-stage device in *Rhesus*, which as we saw is awkward as well as visually impactful, highlights the problematic nature of several aspects of the play's stagecraft. As intimated above, many of the play's faults are the outcome of sensationalism carrying it over sound dramaturgy—a flaw not uncommon in fourth-century tragedy, if as seems probable Aristotle's strictures (*Poetics* 1453b7–11) against those who rely on spectacular effects for dramatic efficacy are directed against contemporary playwrights.[51]

Let us begin with a matter concerning an integral part of the configuration of *Rhesus*. The play contains eleven speaking characters, which is an exceptionally high number, considering that *Rhesus* is the shortest of all surviving Greek tragedies; only Euripides' *Phoenician Women* has as many characters, and even much longer plays like *Orestes* or *Oedipus at Colonus* have fewer.[52] Presumably this is attributable to the playwright's eagerness to create intense drama; still, he ends up introducing more characters than he knows what to do with, and as a result he is left with a number of redundant *dramatis personae*. To take but one example, Aeneas, for all the sound military advice he offers (*Rh.* 105–130), is not dramatically indispensable: had Hector's character been more inclined to prudence, he could have easily fulfilled much the same dramatic function.[53]

Another striking case of a redundant character is found the notorious "Alexander scene" (642–674), in which Alexander (Paris) is introduced for a brief interval of 23 lines. Alexander intends to inform Hector of a possible infiltration of the Trojan camp by Greek spies, but Athena, appearing to him as Aphrodite, his patron goddess, assures him that nothing is amiss; Alexander consequently goes back to the camp. As we shall see in the ensuing

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[50] Cf. Paduano (1984–1985) 267.

[51] Cf. Kitto (1977) 349.

[52] Cf. Aichele in Jens (1971) 82, although in view of E. *Ph.* one cannot accept his statement that *Rh.* has "von allen erhaltenen griechischen Tragödien die längste Personenliste".

[53] Cf. Wilamowitz (1926) 287 = (1962) 414.

paragraph, this scene seems to require the extra expense of a fourth actor (see further pp. 250–253 below) but does not seem to serve any discernible dramatic purpose.

Although it may have respectable mythic ancestry,[54] the scene is multiply bizarre. First of all, a divinity appearing in the guise (not of a mortal or an animal but) of another divinity is unparalleled—certainly in tragedy and, as far as I can ascertain, in serious Greek literature.[55] Even in comedy, where divine transformations are more freely used for comic effect,[56] this seems to have been exceptional: in a comedy by Amphis (fr. 46 K-A),[57] Zeus took on the features of Artemis in order to insinuate himself into Callisto's company; but this seems to have been no more than comic burlesque, unfit for serious poetry.[58] Further, however one imagines Athena's transformation being staged, it would seem hardly appropriate for the fierce virgin goddess to assume the trappings of the goddess of sex. Indeed, it seems safe to assume that this would have been inconceivable in fifth-century Athens, where even the comic poets, otherwise merciless in their derisive portrayal of gods, customarily exempted their city's tutelary deity from their satire.[59] This scene, one is tempted to surmise, has nothing but mere sensationalism to suggest it: we are presumably meant to revel in the paradox of one divinity appearing as her exact opposite to fool the latter's mortal protégé. There is no question of Athena's transformation being somehow enacted onstage: despite e.g. Bates

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54 A black-figure neck-amphora from Vulci (500–490 BC) depicts on one side a woman facing a hoplite looking back and on the other two crouching hoplites, one of them looking back: see *CVA* Netherlands 3 (Leiden, 1972), 31 with pl. 38. Tiverios (1980), esp. 64–66, reviving an earlier suggestion by J.E.G. Roulez, argued that the crouching soldiers are Odysseus and Diomedes lying in ambush, the female figure Athena (possibly posing as Aphrodite), and the hoplite next to her Alexander. That both "Alexander" and one of the crouching hoplites look back may suggest apprehension, which fits a night-raid episode. Further, Tiverios (1980) 67–72, and pl. 14α-β identified the same theme split up between two Attic black-figure olpai (525–475 BC).

55 Cf. Jouan (2004) xxxv f., liii. Bond (1996) 268 tries to downplay the anomaly by arguing that the effect of Athena's transformation on Paris is the same as it would be if she were to take mortal form (e.g. as Hector or Aeneas). But this is to beg the question: why did the playwright plump for the anomalous option?

56 Cf. e.g. Dionysus' disguise as Paris in Cratinus' *Dionysalexandros*, on which see Revermann (1997), or Jupiter's as Amphitryon in Plautus' *Amphitruo*.

57 Cf. also Apollod. 3. 8. 2; Σ Call. *Hy.* 1. 41 (II. 43 Pf.); Nonn. 2. 122–123, 33. 289–292; Ov. *Met.* 2. 425; Geffcken (1936) 4–5 with n. 10.

58 See A. Henrichs in Bremmer (1988) 262 with n. 82.

59 Athena is not above deceit *per se*: one recalls the cold-blooded aloofness with which she inveigles Ajax in Sophocles' play. However, as Fraenkel (1965) 240 remarked, in *Ajax* Athena is ruthless in the exercise of her power, which perfectly becomes a Greek deity; in *Rhesus* she is merely frivolous.

(1916) 10, if "Athena" were to step out to change costume her exit should have been expressly signalled in the script; and at any rate, the *verbal* reference to her disguise should suffice as an indication of her perceived transformation.

The implications of this scene are more far-reaching than may appear at first sight. Alexander's entrance, which necessitates Athena's onstage "transformation", does not seem to serve any dramatic purpose whatsoever, save the (rather cheap) thrill occasioned by the goddess's sensational trick.[60] This was already seen by Wilamowitz[61] and by Pearson,[62] although critics have striven in vain to discover a less undignified role for the Alexander scene. Thus, it was argued by, among others, Pohlenz and Ritchie that Alexander "is brought in principally as a means of filling the interval required for the murder of Rhesus off stage".[63] However, not only does this fail to determine Alexander's *dramatic* function (how does a mere interval-filling character bring the plot forward?), it also misses a crucial point. In Greek tragedy, it is by no means necessary for dramatic action to unfold in "real time": the actual time required for Rhesus' murder could have been compressed into a few minutes of stage-time during which, for instance, the chorus might have re-entered to express their anxiety over the suspected infiltration of their camp (cf. 675 ff.).[64] Such compression of dramatic time, albeit not common, does occur in all three tragedians, most strikingly perhaps in Aeschylus.[65] Moreover, as pointed out by Albini (1993) 83 n. 2, the conversation between Alexander and Athena /"Aphrodite" lasts for barely more than twenty lines, that is ca. 80 seconds at most; by "real-time" standards, the massacre of Rhesus and his Thracians cannot be over in such a short time.

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[60] Cf. Norwood (1954) 44 with n. 5. On the triviality of this scene cf. Burnett (1985) 40.

[61] Wilamowitz (1926) 287 = (1962) 414: "Wir mögen den Tragiker gering schätzen, der den Alexandros lediglich um dieses Tricks willen einführt".

[62] Pearson (1921) 59: "Athena's interference is that of a mischievous stage-puppet, whose proceedings merely provoke our incredulity".

[63] Quotation from Ritchie (1964) 125, following Pohlenz (1954) 471. The notion of the Alexander episode as a mere "time-filler" was also accepted by, among others, Fenik (1964) 19 n. 1 (with misgivings), Kitto (1977) 340, and Lesky (1983) 398.

[64] The suggestion is also made by Burnett (1985) 38.

[65] Thus, in *Ag.* 810 Agamemnon arrives from Troy not long after the news of the city's fall has reached Mycenae by beacons (281 ff.), which in "real life" would mean that he was travelling almost at the speed of light. In *Eu.* 235 Orestes arrives from Delphi to Athens (a distance of *c.* 170 km.) in the space of *c.* 140 lines. In S. *OC* 1043–1095 Theseus goes off to chase the abductors of Oedipus' daughters, is imagined as riding as far as Eleusis (1049), and yet is back at Colonus by 1096; and in E. *Su.* 364–381 Theseus is able to travel from Eleusis to Athens, hold a popular assembly there (349–353, 393–394), and return to Eleusis, all in the space of 25 lines. Most impressively perhaps, in *Andr.* a mere 35 lines, the length of a single choral song (1009–1046), suffice not only for Orestes to go from Pharsalos to Delphi and kill Neoptolemus, but also for the news of the murder to travel back to Pharsalos.

Further, *Rhesus* has a fairly sizeable number of dramaturgical faults, which seem to stem from mere carelessness, rather than from a desire to impress, as in the case of the Alexander scene. In what follows I shall briefly discuss some of the most glaring examples.

1. The chorus's identity as soldiers on guard duty proves to be an exceedingly bad idea. That they should abandon their posts *en bloc*, whether to report on unusual enemy activity or to wake up the next watch, is unrealistic. That they should not seem to realize this before 527 borders on the ludicrous. That Hector berates them for their neglect only at 808–819 defies belief, as does the fact that he promptly drops the charges.[66] What is even more puzzling is that all this could have been easily avoided merely by having the chorus consist of soldiers *not* on guard duty (e.g. of Hector's bodyguards).

2. The chorus's first entrance is marred by an instance of self-contradiction that is as inexplicable as it is blatant. In 23 ff. they urge Hector to act swiftly by having his forces prepare for battle; barely fifty lines later (76–77) they warn him that it would be foolhardy to take any military action before establishing the intentions of the enemy. For obvious dramatic reasons Hector must indeed remain onstage rather than leave for the battlefield; but it is hard to see why he is urged to do so, at the price of dramatic inconsistency, by the bewildered chorus rather than (an obvious alternative) by the level-headed Aeneas.

3. In 806 ff. Hector enters the stage in a fury, having just been apprized of Rhesus' murder. The last time we saw Hector he was about to show Rhesus and his retinue their bivouac for the night (518–526). If we are to trust Athena's statement to Alexander at 662, Hector is still with the Thracian army even at the very moment when Rhesus is being killed. Nonetheless, Hector cannot have been in the Thracian bivouac while it was being infiltrated by the Greek marauders, or he would not be in a position convincingly to berate the guards for their negligence (cf. 808 ff.). The contradiction seems to be irresolvable; as Morstadt (1827) 50–51 saw, the author simply leaves us in the dark as to Hector's whereabouts during this critical time. This is no more than a piece of slovenly dramaturgy.

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66 Cf. already Hardion (1741) 520–521 and, more recently, Ragone (1969) 79 and Paduano (1984–1985) 267. Even Grube (1941) 440 n. 1, a supporter of the authenticity of *Rhesus*, found himself obliged to acknowledge this "awkwardness".

4. Later in the play (833 ff.) Rhesus' charioteer fiercely accuses Hector of having masterminded the murder of Rhesus in order to appropriate the latter's splendid horses. Evidently, the purpose of this indictment is to generate the ensuing debate between Hector and the charioteer. However, there is surprisingly little to debate in this ἀγὼν λόγων: the audience has, as it were, no stake in it, since they know already that Hector is innocent; and the only one who needs to be convinced, namely the charioteer, is no longer there when the Muse reveals the true culprits (938–940).[67]

How Many Actors? The "Alexander Scene" Again

Apart from Athena's onstage transformation, the Alexander scene (see pp. 246–248 above) probably entails yet another highly unusual feature, namely the use of a fourth actor. Several scholars have tried to obviate this anomaly mainly by assuming that the scene could be performed with only three actors if the actor playing Odysseus reappeared as Alexander after, at most, sixteen lines (626–641), only to slip back into Odysseus' costume within a maximum of eleven lines following Alexander's exit (664–674).[68] This "lightning-change" theory[69] has been rejected by Battezzato (2000) 369, who argued that the actor supposedly playing Alexander/Odysseus not only has to change costume and mask, he must also run from one *eisodos* to the opposite, since in his reconstruction Alexander exits through *eisodos* A whereas Odysseus re-enters through *eisodos* B.[70]

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[67] This piece of plot-mismanagement has been castigated by several scholars, e.g. Morstadt (1827) 56; Vater (1837), pp. xliii f.; Hagenbach (1863) 25; Menzer (1867) 18; Albert (1876) 24; Kannicht (1966) 297 n. 6.

[68] For lists of such scholars, and for those in favour of a fourth actor, see Ritchie (1964) 127 n. 1 (who wants a three-actor *Rhesus*); Battezzato (2000) 367 n. 1 (who argues for a four-actor play). Battezzato (2000) 369 gives 15 lines as the space available for the actor playing Alexander to slip back into Odysseus' costume, i.e. from 664 to 681. But 681 (τούσδ' ἔχω, τούσδ' ἔμαρψα) is too late: the chorus' βάλε βάλε etc. at 675 suggest that they are in pursuit of Odysseus, and so Odysseus must be visible as early as 675.

[69] The theory, as well as the term, was first proposed by Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 148. Alleged cases of lightning changes of costume in Euripidean drama adduced by Ritchie (1964) 126–129 are effectively refuted by Battezzato (2000) 370–371.

[70] The problem Battezzato identifies was already hinted at by Bond (1996) 270 n. 28, who did not pursue it further. If the play was performed in the Theatre of Dionysus in Athens, then on Battezzato's reconstruction the actor playing Alexander/Odysseus would have to cross a distance of some 30 m (more precisely, between 28 and 33 m) from one *eisodos* to the other. On the much-debated question of the spatial dimensions of the Theatre of Dionysus cf. the convenient overview by Mastronarde (1990) 248–249. For reconstructions of the Periclean

Pace Battezzato, I consider it likelier, as we have seen (p. 240 above), that Odysseus re-entered by *eisodos* A, that is to say by the same *eisodos* as the one used by Alexander for his exit, and so the Alexander/Odysseus actor would not have to scurry from one *eisodos* to another. (It is true, however, that the Alexander/Odysseus actor would still have to rush from *eisodos* B to *eisodos* A during the ca. 50 seconds between lines 626 at earliest and 642 at latest, since at 626 Odysseus exits by *eisodos* B towards the Thracian bivouac and at 642 Alexander enters by *eisodos* A, coming from the Trojan camp.) Still, I am as convinced as Battezzato is that a fourth actor is required for Alexander's part, though for a different reason. For the same actor to play both Odysseus' and Alexander's roles, a very considerable amount of nimble back-stage coordination and sheer physical effort involving several stage-hands would be required—as indeed was the case in a modern three-actor production of *Rhesus*, in which "Odysseus" was able to change in time to reappear as "Alexander".[71] Such pitch-perfect coordination was no doubt possible in the ancient theatre too, but it would also recklessly open up the performance to more numerous, more precarious and more unpredictable contingencies than those involved in a regular, run-of-the-mill staging of any given play. There is no reason why even a moderately competent playwright would want to encumber his production with more technical difficulties (and, consequently, with a greater margin for error) than those he would have to deal with anyway. Moreover, advocates of a three-actor *Rhesus* fail to take into account that, as we saw (p. 248 above), Alexander's entrance is anything but essential for the plot, which makes it all the more incredible that the *Rhesus* author should have submitted his third actor to so much senseless scuttle on account of an unnecessary scene. Positing a fourth actor for the role of Alexander does not remove the redundancy of that scene, but at least avoids the precarious solution of a single actor having to change masks and costumes, twice over, in the space of a few lines.

In attempting to circumvent the difficulties presented by Alexander's entrance, some scholars have suggested that Athena was a disembodied voice rather than an actor physically present on stage.[72] This, again, is very

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stage see Pickard-Cambridge (1946) 16 fig. 7 (ca. 33 m. long); H.-J. Newiger in Seeck (1979) 461, 494 (ca. 28.2 m long).

71 See Marshall 2002, with reference to a performance directed by George Kovacs, in the Basement Theatre, at the Arts and Culture Centre in St. John's, Newfoundland, in October 2001.

72 Thus notably Vater (1837) p. lv n.*, followed by Hartung (1843) 40 with n.*, Taplin (1977b) 366 n. 1, and Burlando (1997) 81–83.

unlikely: Ritchie (1964) 128–129 pointed out that, while off-stage voices are sometimes used for cries and short utterances ἔνδοθεν, they would not be sufficiently audible or distinct for a part of such magnitude as Athena's. Other ways of dealing with this difficulty have been suggested, but carry very little conviction: the reader may consult with profit Battezzato (2000) 369–373, who effectively refutes all of them, leaving the use of a fourth actor as the only plausible alternative.

If *Rhesus* does indeed require four actors, what does this signify for its date? *Pace* Battezzato (2000) 367, this is an important argument against a fifth-century date, since his alleged examples of four-actor plays from the fifth century are, in my opinion, specious.[73] In *Choephori* 886–900 there is probably enough time for the Servant to enter the *skēnē*-building through the central door and reappear as Pylades through the same door.[74] The strain this would have involved for the actor would have been outweighed by the stunning theatrical effect of having Pylades speak for the first and only time (900–902), thereby foregrounding him as "the spokesman of Apollo".[75] By contrast, in *Rhesus*, whether one uses a fourth actor or somehow manages to whisk the third actor out of sight and then back on stage in a matter of seconds, the fact remains that, as pointed out above, the Alexander scene is totally superfluous from a dramaturgical point of view. As for Battezzato's second alleged example, namely *Oedipus at Colonus*, a fourth actor would admittedly obviate the need to have the part of Theseus taken in turn by each of the three actors.[76] But role-splitting is a possibility taken seriously into account by Pickard-Cambridge and Sifakis;[77] and even if a fourth actor is unavoidable in the *Coloneus*, that play is late enough to account for the break from the three-actor rule, which is otherwise invariably respected in fifth-century tragedy. All in all, then, it seems that *Rhesus*' use of four actors should be put down to its having been produced in an age in which fifth-century conventions were giving way to experimentation with new dramatic forms. As to the distribution of parts, here is one among several possible configurations:

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73 Against Battezzato, on this point, see also Poe (2004) 31 with n. 58.

74 Cf. Garvie (1986), pp. xlvii–lii, esp. l.

75 Garvie (1986), p. l.

76 That is to say, third actor from 550 to 667, from 1109 to 1210, and from 1500 to 1555; second actor from 887 to 1043; first actor from 1751 to the end. For the argument, and discussion, see Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 142. Cf. also McCart (2007) 255–257.

77 Pickard-Cambridge (n. 76); Sifakis (1995) 19–21; *contra* Battezzato (2000) 372 with n. 42.

Actor 1: Hector (11–526, 808–992), Odysseus (565–626, 675–689).
Actor 2: Aeneas (87–148), shepherd (264–335), Athena (595–674), Muse (890–983).
Actor 3: Dolon (154–223), Rhesus (388–526), Diomedes (565–637), charioteer (728–878).
Actor 4: Alexander (642–664).

GREEK COMEDY

THREE ACTORS IN OLD COMEDY, AGAIN*

C.W. Marshall

Misunderstandings about the nature of role doubling in Athenian theatre continue, and assumptions about the practice obscure a historically informed understanding of how doubling impacts the interpretation of Greek drama. In this paper, following an overview of previous scholarship and a new assessment of the nature of the evidence (sections I and II), I wish to revisit the practice of role doubling in Aristophanes, with a particular focus on Aristophanes' *Birds* (section III). This provides new insight into the demands placed on actors in comedy in the fifth century (section IV), and helps articulate what is at stake in considering these questions (section V).

I. *Context*

The practice of doubling in Greek theatre is not in doubt. All dramatic genres in antiquity included as part of the mimetic process actors playing more than one character.[1] In fifth-century Athenian tragedy, it appears that each dramatic entry used only three speaking actors, not including the chorus and the *koryphaios*. This so-called "Rule of Three Actors" is not stated explicitly in fifth-century texts, but its existence is supported both by later testimony,[2] and circumstantially by the plays themselves: with the exception of Sophocles' posthumously-produced *Oedipus at Colonus*, every extant tragedy can be made to fit the Three-Actor Rule. No extant tragedy (or any reasonably reconstructed fragmentary tragedy) requires more than

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1 Only Euripides' *Cyclops* with its three characters has no doubling, but it was part of a tetralogy in which the actors surely adopted different roles: when considered as part of the full entry in the dramatic competition, even this apparent exception involves doubling.

2 Among the ancient testimonia, see, e.g., Aristotle, *Poetics* 1449a14–19, Horace *Ars Poetica* 192, and Martial 6.6 (explained by H. Parker 1994). For a general modern statement, see Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 135–156.

three speaking actors. This is, in itself, improbable, and even *Oedipus at Colonus* adheres to the rule if the character of Theseus may be shared between actors.[3] The application of the Three-Actor Rule to tragic texts produces surprising parallels between characters that yield an interpretative benefit for understanding the play.[4] It is never necessary for a spectator to recognize the actor/character tension, but it is information that can enhance the understanding of the play or of the performance, supplementing audience appreciation for the theatrical moment.

It is less clear that the Rule of Three Actors was in effect in the late-fourth century. While no fragment of tragedy or comedy unambiguously presents a scene in which there are more than three non-choral speakers, if the Rule of Three Actors remains in effect, then part-splitting apparently becomes normative (as seen in Menander's *Dyscolus*). This may be seen as a relaxation of the fifth-century rule (the earliest evidence for which being *Oedipus at Colonus* and Aristophanes' last play, *Wealth*[5]), or it may be a re-imagining of it, where the performance aesthetic rewards part-splitting. Whatever the case, it indicates a diachronic development in stagecraft practice and the aesthetic that produced it.[6]

The situation in Old Comedy is less straightforward. Though one can only deal with probabilities in any case, it seems worth asking whether the performance expectations of Aristophanes seem to adhere to the articulation of the Rule in either of the two senses already established, or in some other sense.[7] A quick survey of representative opinions shows the range

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[3] Ceadel 1941 and Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 142–144. Such part-splitting does not adhere to a modern, Western dramatic aesthetic, perhaps, but it is certainly conceivable. The extensive deletions proposed by Müller 1996, which have found some approval from Dawe (2001) 15–21, would eliminate Ismene as a speaking character from the Sophoclean play and in so doing would also remove part-splitting from tragedy and the fifth century. The issue is fraught, and cannot be decided here, but too much cannot be placed on the example of this play.

[4] See, e.g., Pavlovskis 1977; Damen 1989; Cohen 1999; Dickin 2008.

[5] See Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 153.

[6] In contrast, Konstantakos (2005) 207–213 argues that fourth-century ("Middle") comedy could use a fourth actor, and that if anything this represents continuity from the fifth century, with the rules being tightened in the 320s or 310s. This proposed development, increasing regulation by the end of the fourth century, would be anomalous if true.

[7] These are questions I have discussed previously, in a 1997 article, where the emphasis was on answering arguments in MacDowell (1994) that four actors were regularly used, with particular attention being paid to *Acharnians*. Konstantakos (2005) 208 n. 66 characterizes my position as far-fetched because it might prove more exhausting for an actor. It is more demanding, but the point is irrelevant. Section IV of the present study considers the demands on actors directly.

of possibilities. Pickard-Cambridge, in a position echoed by Russo, has established the majority opinion: "It seems probable therefore, that in Old Comedy the greater part of the work was done by three actors, but that for a particular scene, when required, or perhaps when available, or for very small parts, a fourth was employed."[8] With a change of emphasis, this is roughly Walton's position, that "a smallish acting group of no fixed number" was used.[9] Henderson and Olson in their Oxford commentaries allow for a fifth speaking actor for small parts (which again amounts to a variation of Pickard-Cambridge).[10] MacDowell, considering the nature of Athenian competition and the (no doubt exaggerated) outrage arising from a single illicit chorister at Demosthenes 21.56–61, responded, arguing "What we must not accept is that the limit was four but a fifth actor was sometimes used" ((1994) 326); he concludes that "The evidence seems to establish that the number of speaking actors in a comedy at this period was fixed at four by the rules of the contest" (335).[11] MacDowell's account foundered on *Acharnians*, however, which (in his words) "remains problematic" (335). I subsequently provided an account of *Acharnians* employing rapid costume changes and allowing a form of ventriloquism, where in certain circumstances one actor on stage could provide the voice for another stage character being played by a non-speaking extra. The first practice is required in tragedy (e.g. five lines for a change at Aeschylus, *Libation Bearers* 887–892), and the second is established for comedy (*Lysistrata* 879).[12] By employing those two techniques across the corpus of extant fifth-century comedy, I argued that a hard limit of three actors, as in tragedy, was to be preferred, though as with MacDowell one play could not be accommodated to this scheme, this time *Lysistrata*.

All of these positions are possible, and none can be discounted absolutely by those arguing on any side, despite the rhetoric that is sometimes used. How we distinguish between them depends on what production values we believe were operating in fifth-century comic competition. Given the choice between no firm regulated limit (with or without a tendency towards three or four actors), a hard limit of four actors, and a hard limit of three actors, I contend that it is possible to re-affirm, with an increased degree of certainty,

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8 Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 153, and generally see (1968) 149–153, following Russo (1994).
9 Walton (1980) 143, and see 142–143.
10 Henderson (1987) xlii–xliii on *Lysistrata*; Olson (2002) lxiii–lxv on *Acharnians*.
11 This view has been endorsed by Revermann (2006a) 1.
12 Henderson (1987) 177; MacDowell (1994) 328; Marshall (1997) 78.

the likelihood that the Rule of Three Actors, as used in tragedy, was also in force for the period of Old Comedy that is represented with complete plays.

II. *Evidence*

Part of the difficulty stems from a disagreement about what constitutes acceptable evidence. The important advance made by MacDowell was the recognition of the importance of the competitive dimension in the theatrical contests, and no better model has been suggested to explain the origin of any limitation: it is ultimately a question of a Rule and not a Suggestion of Three Actors. If such a rule is operating, then we must expect it to be adhered to in competition; if it was not so followed, then the operating principle was not rigid (so Russo and Pickard-Cambridge).[13] The best raw data for determining the application of the Rule are the plays of Aristophanes themselves. These eleven plays had all been entered in competition at either the Lenaia or the Dionysia. Unfortunately, in several cases, the texts in the manuscripts do not correspond to the texts that were performed with significant variations. When those differences can be identified, there exists the possibility that the script no longer adheres to the Rule of Three Actors.

The most obvious example is *Clouds*. Since the surviving text is an unperformed partially re-written version of the play that placed third at the Dionysia of 423, the allocation of actors cannot be used as evidence for the competition performance. Indeed, discussions of the play's structure typically invoke its unfinished state in effecting the reconstructions.[14] Since none of the scholars reconstructing *Clouds* use their theories to argue for my position on the Rule of Three Actors, the impact of the inevitable circularity (whereby the original shape of the play is potentially different depending on how doubling is believed to have operated in Old Comedy) is minimized. Their interest lies elsewhere, and their positions as a result may be seen to be

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[13] How the rule was applied may also have changed over time (or conceivably by festival), and it is always possible that in given years a different rule (say, with a higher limit) was employed. There is no external evidence that any of these possibilities were the case. While we can see how the rule developed through the classical period, I see no indication from the plays that there was a change during the period of Aristophanes' career (427–c. 388). To assume ongoing experimentation with the rule without evidence removes the possibility of any coherent formulation about its function.

[14] See for example Dover (1968) lxxx–xcviii and Russo (1994) 97–109 though of course the tension underlies many discussions of the play.

neutral on the question of doubling: those who have published on the number of actors in comedy (such as Dover and Russo) are not arguing for the rigid application of the Rule. When Revermann describes "the high likelihood that this ending [in *Clouds*] was never performed in front of an audience" (2006: 228), his conclusion stands independent of any consideration of the Rule of Three Actors. The most neutral way of dealing with the problem is simply to exclude *Clouds* from consideration when positing an initial conclusion. Once formulated, the conclusion can be measured against *Clouds* to discover the implications of the formulation for that play (and this process might in turn force us to reconsider the initial formulation). Similarly, the presence of a momentarily empty stage at *Wealth* 1170 does not make the play somehow unperformable. Though recent editors have not accepted Bergk's insertion of a missing XOPOY ("[song] of the chorus") after 1170, the argument is equivocal, and Revermann's arguments for its restitution are strong.[15] In any case, the disagreements exist because of our lack of knowledge of the fourth-century chorus and dramatic construction, and not because of the number of actors. Even without an act-break, however, there is no overlap of actors and the use of three remains a possibility.

Clouds is not the only play where the surviving text does not correspond to the performance script. The extant text of *Frogs* contains several doublets in the final scene (first isolated by Sommerstein), where lines from the original 405 production are found alongside the revised text of 404.[16] The presence of these doublets and the knowledge that the play was reperformed outside of the competitive context mean that *Frogs* too must be removed from consideration about the nature of the Rule. Consequently, while greater alteration to the text is required than Sommerstein allows for Plouton to have been a silent character in the 405 production (as would be required for a strict application of the Rule, as I see it), the fact that there are extensive detectable variants in the final scene means that the play is also best excluded from our initial consideration.[17]

A third play to be excluded is *Lysistrata*. As Revermann has argued, the ending of *Lysistrata* as it survives in the manuscripts can only be adequately explained if the play was re-worked for reperformance, in a Spartan context, such as in the South Italian colony of Taras.[18] *Lysistrata* was the one play

15 Revermann (2006) 274–281, esp. 277.
16 Sommerstein (1996) 148–151, 285–290; they are also distinguished by N.G. Wilson 2007.
17 See also Marshall, *EMC/CV* 18 (1999) 145–150, at 149–150.
18 Revermann (2006) 70, 254–260, and see Marshall, *AJP* 128 (2007) 431–435, at 435.

for which in 1997 I could not make what I felt was a reasonable case using only three actors.[19] Revermann's argument that the play was at least partially re-written for South Italian reperformance is strengthened when the Spartan context of the problem passages, involving the presence of Lampito, are acknowledged. *Lysistrata* appears to operate with a uniquely individuated pair of chorus leaders, and given that the chorus is the most financially demanding aspect of a production, a South Italian reperformance would not be obliged to preserve choral aspects deriving from the Athenian competition any more than it would have to adhere to the Rule of Three Actors. In this context, it may be significant that Revermann also argues for South Italian reperformances of *Frogs* and *Acharnians*.[20] *Frogs*, we know, has been revised in any case, but the presence of *Acharnians* in this set, while I believe it can be performed with three actors in any case, nevertheless warrants future examination from the perspective of MacDowell's difficulties in getting the play to adhere to his proposed four-actor limit.

Revermann's general conclusion is almost certainly applicable to the remaining eight plays (excluding *Clouds, Frogs*, and *Lysistrata*): "there is a strong case for assuming that the preserved texts of fifth-century drama reflect an advanced stage of the play's evolution in which the experience of at least one production (and quite possibly only one production) under competitive conditions is already incorporated into the script" ((2006a) 95). In all eight plays, the assignment of roles to actors can be done in a way that fits each of the three suggested principles for role assignment (no hard limit, a hard limit of four, and, the most restrictive of these, a hard limit of three). Further, while Revermann does not accept the use of only three speaking actors, it is his discussion of *Lysistrata* that provides the key to integrating this play into the three-actor scheme that I propose.

In addition to Aristophanes' plays, there is other evidence, of limited applicability. Among the hundreds of fragments of Old Comedy that survive in quotation or papyrus, there are only two non-extant plays for which there is enough information that a reconstruction might involve more than three speaking actors. In Eupolis' *Demes*,[21] four dead leaders return to Athens

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19 Konstantakos is correct that "Marshall cannot stage *Lys*. [sc. in its surviving form] … with only three actors" ((2005) 208 n. 66). No one, however, proposes staging the play without ventriloquism, which renders that objection moot.

20 "The case for reperformances of *Frogs* and *Acharnians* is almost similarly strong on the basis of iconographic evidence from South Italy" (Revermann (2006a) 69, and see n. 11).

21 Storey (2003) 111–174 and Telò 2007.

(Aristeides, Miltiades, Pericles, and Solon), summoned necromantically by Pyronides. Depending on how the plot was presented it might naturally be thought to require more than three speaking actors. Storey's convincing reconstruction however concludes that when the four are raised lines were given only to "Aristeides, speaking on behalf of the four" (2003: 160). Subsequent scenes had characters speak individually and in succession, with only one appearing at a time. In Aristophanes' *Gerytades*,[22] a delegation of three living poets (Meletus, Sannyrion, and Cinesias, who had also appeared as a character in *Birds*) are sent to the underworld to meet with dead poets. While such a scene may have involved many speaking characters, we do not know that the play presented all of the delegation together, or that they were all speaking characters, or that the *katabasis* even took place as part of the dramatic action represented: it may have occurred before the play begins or been described by a messenger, for example. *Gerytades* then cannot be used as evidence for the question of an actor limit either.

Similarly, the precise relationship between theatrical scenes on red-figure vases from the fifth- and fourth-centuries and the plays they depict cannot be known in every case. Many vases, most of which are from South Italy, do appear to depict theatrical scenes. If we assume that they tend to represent actual plays accurately, and if we assume that the image depicts a single moment of that play, and if we assume that the plays depicted on fourth-century South Italian vases accurately present the stagecraft and performance of unaltered Athenian comedies—if we assume all these things (and there is no reason to believe they are all so), there is still no clear case of more than three figures in an illustration who are necessarily meant to be understood as being played by more than three speaking actors. The closest possible exception is the Choregoi vase,[23] where we see four characters: a naturalistically drawn (tragic?) Aegisthus, a comedic slave labeled Pyrrhias, and two comedic figures labeled Choregos. Though there are four figures, because two are labeled identically we cannot eliminate the possibility that these are choristers (or, given the differences in their hair colour, a *koryphaios* and a chorister, or the leaders of two semi-choruses).[24] In sum, evidence

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[22] See Henderson (2007) 184–199.

[23] New York, Fleischman coll. F93. Apulian bell-krater, 400–380. *RVAp* supp. ii. 7–8, 1/124 and pl. 1.3–4. Both Trendall and Taplin treat the *khorēgoi* as leaders of semichoruses (Taplin (1993) 55–63).

[24] Gilula 1995 provides the strongest objection, arguing that they are characters representing stagehands, a master and an apprentice. Both need not be speaking characters. Given

from vase-paintings and comic fragments does not allow us to exclude any of the three possibilities we are considering.

There are a number of other factors that may be invoked but which cannot be given determinative weight in assessing this question. These include later texts (which may reflect non-competitive and/or non-Athenian performance traditions) and subjective and aesthetic qualities. This last category is really quite extensive, and we need to be wary of it. Because a particular doubling combination seems appealing or metatheatrical or otherwise desirable does not constitute evidence for it. We cannot assume that Aristophanes wants to be illusion-breaking or otherwise disruptive, and we should be wary of transferring our theatrical tastes, conditioned primarily in the West from twentieth-century naturalistic and postmodern theatre traditions, onto antiquity. Once a hypothesis is reached, these subjective elements do emerge, and it becomes possible to describe the (likely) benefits or liabilities of a particular doubling combination. If a particular role assignment leads to these qualitative improvements, it may be seen to be preferable to rival role assignments. Such aesthetic qualities must be seen as secondary, though, since they are bound to be culturally conditioned. The plays are the primary evidence, and, as previous publications have documented, the eight plays of Aristophanes for which there is not positive evidence of extensive post-performance re-writing, can be allocated between three speaking actors, between four speaking actors, or between three or four with minor "apprentice" actors (as Russo describes them).

III. Birds*: The Trouble with Triballians*

The fact that the roles in the performance texts can be divided between three actors does not mean that they were, of course. Nevertheless, if we accept that the eight plays allow for any of the three modes of division (each of which may have several possible permutations, depending on the play), we do begin to see interpretative benefits of assigning the roles only to three actors, as I argued in 1997. What do I mean by "interpretative benefits"? Three things are primary. Above all, using three speaking actors creates a simplicity, a cleanness of movement, that (I believe) should be preferred due

the unusual depiction of Aegisthus, the generic differences in representation, and the large number of extraneous non-dramatic individuals on these vases generally, all sorts of doubt remain.

to a principle of the *lex parsimoniae*.[25] In section V, we shall see that this also corresponds to an economic savings, though I do not claim such benefits to be evidence in themselves.[26] The second benefit follows from this, but is seen through the perspective of an ancient theatre professional: the assumption of a three-actor limit provides fewer permutations and matters of choice for the director (who need not have been the poet, something more true with Aristophanes than any other known Greek playwright), and this leads to an increased sense of theatrical structure and implied stage directions.[27] Third, it provides an opportunity for the playwright, director, and actors, working as a team, to showcase their technical virtuosity under the pressures of performance. When there exist opportunities for surprising an audience with novelty, technique, or additional humour, a solution deserves attention, or at least consideration. The coincidence of these three qualities leads to a sense of interpretative benefit that is simply lacking if there is either no limit, or if the hard limit is four speaking actors.

A detailed examination of *Birds* shows how using three actors clarifies the stage action of that play. *Birds* was produced at the Dionysia of 414, and was directed by Callistratus. A few months previously at the Lenaea Aristophanes had competed with a medical comedy, *Amphiaraus*, which Philonides had directed. Aristophanes had worked with both men previously, and his work with them in these comedies demonstrates a full understanding of the theatrical form, in a context where as playwright we may assume he provided a dramaturgical shape to the play to facilitate its direction by another.

Though *Birds* is the longest surviving Greek comedy and has the most speaking roles, the structure of the play reveals a clear, organized, and methodical design focused around Peisetaerus. The pattern of the play is completely modular, with each unit articulated in some way by the chorus. There is nothing accidental about the dramatic structure, and the

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25 This logical principle is akin to Occam's Razor (*entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem*).

26 Cleanness of movement can involve onstage actions, entrances and exits, and, as I have discussed in relationship to tragedy (1994), backstage movement.

27 Taplin 1977b and Revermann (2006a) 320–325. If we accept the possibility that the financial exigencies associated with production in the fifth century resulted in the use of parts during rehearsal, with only an actor's own lines written out (this is suggested by *P.Oxy*. 4546, for example; see Marshall 2004 and Revermann (2006a) 87–94), there is no possible confusion from the actor's perspective, since the part has the roles the actor will play on it. There is no decision required for the performer, who has literally in hand exactly what lines he will need to deliver come performance day.

deliberate pacing demonstrates that the playwright is thinking in terms of clean production values and the modular design. Though there are so many speaking roles, it is perhaps surprising that for the first half of the play (which because of its staging simplicity can be treated as a single module), there are only four speaking characters (Peisetaerus, Euelpides, Tereus and his Servant):[28]

	A	B	C
1–84	Euelpides	Peisetaerus	Slave (*7 lines for change*)
92–675	Euelpides [Parabasis at 676–800]	Peisetaerus	Tereus

Obviously, the four roles can be divided between four actors, but if they are divided between three, then we have a benchmark for a simple costume change in this play: it must be possible for one actor to change from the Slave to Tereus within seven lines. The change requires no backstage movement (the slave enters the *skênê* door, and Tereus emerges from it), and, at a delivery pace of between ten and twenty lines per minute,[29] this leaves somewhere between twenty and forty seconds for the change, which must constitute (at least) a change of mask and, likely, the addition of Tereus' costume.[30] This is an unproblematic theatrical move. The effect is enhanced for the audience because of the nature of the hoopoe's costume, which may be very elaborate. The specific details of the costume's appearance do not mean that the change requires any more time: indeed it likely involves putting on the same elements as any other costume. MacDowell believes "it would be more convenient if different actors played them" ((1994) 330), but it certainly was not required, and a space of seven lines is comparable to the change from Alexandros to Odysseus in *Rhesus*, which can easily be performed.[31]

28 No hierarchy is assumed between actors: while it is likely that the actor playing Peisetarus would have been thought of as the protagonist, I present them here in the order that they speak.

29 So many variables go into the determination of pace of delivery that anything more prescriptive than this seems rash; this pace is offered as a rough benchmark only, though it has implications of total length of a play (see also Revermann (2006a) 333–337).

30 Alternately, the Tereus costume could be pre-set beneath the slave costume, but though easier this seems less probable.

31 Exactly this move was replicated in a 2001 production of *Rhesus* directed by George Kovacs (see Marshall 2002), in part to answer the claims of Battezzato 2000. Though this was a more intimate venue than the Theatre of Dionysus at Athens, the physical demands for

Moments like these are desirable for performers, allowing them to display their technique, coordination, and successful physical effort, and they are rewarding for spectators.

The second module, which follows the parabasis, involves the arrival of would-be citizens to Nephelokokkugia:

	A		B		C
801–846 (*11 lines*)	Euelpides		Peisetaerus		
859–894 (*9 lines*)			Peisetaerus	←	Priest*
904–953 (*5 lines*)	Poet*	→	Peisetaerus		
959–990 (*1 line*)			Peisetaerus	←	Oracle Collector*
992–1019 (*1 line*)	Meton*	→	Peisetaerus		
1021–1031 (*4 lines*)			Peisetaerus	←	Inspector*
1035–1057	Decree Seller* [Second Parabasis]	→	Peisetaerus	←	Inspector*

*This role could be played by the other actor (A or C).

In this passage, Peisetaerus, now dressed in wings, begins his tyrannical ascent, resisting the entrance of many figures who want to be part of his city. This begins with his ejection of Euelpides, who is sent on errands, never to return. The module comprises seven short scenes, each of which is separated by 1–11 lines. I mention this because until the final scene in this module, it is possible, however unlikely, for the entire exchange to be performed with only two actors; that is not what I am arguing, however, even though the last is the only exchange that requires three actors, as the inspector returns, having been recently driven off. As indicated, many of the roles could be played by a different actor, and what I offer is the simplest possibility, governed by a sense of straightforward alternation and the identity of the Euelpides actor (which carries over from the first module).[32]

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the performer changing costume and mask are no different between the two performance spaces. For a different view, see Liapis in this volume.

[32] Issues of maintaining a consistent offstage geography are important in this case, but the

Peisetaerus eventually engages with both the Inspector and the Decree Seller, but (significantly) neither of them relates to the other (both take all their cues from Peisetaerus). They are effectively unaware of each other's presence, because they are on opposite sides of the performance area, along different *eisodoi*. With this established, and conceding to a desire not to have costume changes over the span of a single line unless there is some obvious benefit, whatever allocation is made for this final scene ripples back through the module, and, as is seen in the figure, means that the simplest staging is also the most effective: with no backstage runs, and only one actor making costume changes at each *eisodos* entrance, the two actors alternately approach Peisetaerus from alternating sides, in a rhythmic, regulated fashion, the mechanical efficiency of which offsets Peisetaerus' increasing frustration. Both actors A and C are kept on different *eisodoi*, which means that regardless of their on-stage actions, it is possible to preserve a cleanness of movement backstage, to assist with the smooth running of the show as it is being evaluated in competition.

Following the Second Parabasis (1058–1121), the third module again focuses on Peisetaerus' encounters with single characters, as war breaks out:

	A	B	C
1122–1163 (*6 lines*)	Messenger A*	Peisetaerus	
1170–1184 (*5 lines*)	Messenger B*	Peisetaerus	
1189–1261 (*9 lines*)		Peisetaerus	Iris*
1271–1307	Herald A* [Strophic *Kommos*]	Peisetaerus	

*This role could be played by the other actor (A or C).

As before, the series of two-character scenes means that multiple assignments are possible, but this module is dominated by the appearance of Iris at 1189. Her presence suspended from the *mēkhanē* might be thought to benefit from

fantastic nature of the plot means that neither *eisodos* needs to lead clearly to an established offstage location. One could have all the characters who are refugees from Athens appear along the same *eisodos* as Peisetaerus and Euelpides had first entered, if it is felt that such consistency is required. My belief is that it is not, though removing the spatial alternation does complicate the physical demands being placed on actors needlessly.

more preparation time than the 25 lines that would be provided if the Iris actor also played Messenger A. Further, if it is important, both Messengers and the Herald come from the direction of the walls, which is where Euelpides had headed on his departure. Continuity with the Euelpides actor and the Euelpides side of the performance area is not needed, but may be seen as a convenient default.[33] A short strophic *kommos* follows (1313–1336).

The fourth module presents three more two-character scenes:

	A	B	C
1337–1372	Father Beater*	Peisetaerus	
1373–1409		Peisetaerus	Cinesias*
1410–1469	Informer* [Strophic Song]	Peisetaerus	

*This role could be played by the other actor (A or C).

In a sense, this module provides another sequence of "intruder" scenes,[34] as a series of even less desirable potential citizens appear. The frenetic pace of all these characters actually increases, and there is not even a single line's grace between the departure of one character and the arrival of another. In all probability that means again different actors playing the characters alternately. Since each of the previous modules has involved the actor I have labeled A (the Euelpides actor, who has begun each of the previous modules as well) I assume that as a default here, but of course it may be reversed, since, as with the previous modules, characters do not return. A short strophic song from the chorus marks the end of this segment (1470–1493).

I am proceeding slowly, because the cumulative awareness of how the roles are assigned is important for the case being made. It is not that the parts are simply capable of being divided between only three speaking actors; it

33 There is no need to see Messenger A and Messenger B as different characters; it could equally be the same character returning immediately. Dunbar (1995) 15 assumes they are played by the same actor, and there is no need to imagine them as requiring a meaningful costume change to distinguish one from the other. Both, it would seem, are avian in appearance. This was first suggested for Messenger A by Rose 1940, arguing that the repeated question in 1122 evokes the cooing of a pigeon; though Thompson 1940 objected, this view has been upheld by Dunbar (1995) 594 (Sommerstein (1991) 274 prefers Thompson's breathless panting). For Messenger B, Sommerstein believes it is "quite possible, though not provable, that he is masked and costumed as a bird" ((1991) 277; and see Dunbar (1995) 608).

34 Revermann (2006a) 336 argues that they double each other and may have been cut in performance.

is rather that things make better dramaturgical sense if they are (and this is irrespective of whether a given role is assigned to actor A or C). *Birds* is constructed with an onstage organization, that creates a clear, clean pattern to the narrative. Further, this regular, clockwork rhythm to the performance, with alternating exits and entrances on (often) opposite sides of the stage, and the associated modular design, would be disrupted if there were a fourth actor present. There is no particular reason to add a fourth actor at any point: the only rushed costume change so far has been from the Slave into Tereus (7 lines) and (if they are separate) Messenger A into Messenger B (6 lines). Both of these moves can be done in practice, and neither requires any backstage movement from the performer. If the elegant alternation between two actors is lost, the wings become cluttered, as additional bodies cross simultaneously.[35] Further, this clarity comes despite the large number of characters that need to be represented. Now, it remains true that it is possible an available fourth actor was simply not employed at all these points, but that is open to the objection that the play calls explicitly for the re-appearance of Euelpides (lines 837–847), when he never in fact returns. This narrative inconsistency is most naturally explained by a limitation on actors: "The absence of this major character from the second half of the play is hard to explain except by the hypothesis that the number of actors was limited, and the actor of this part was wanted to play other parts later."[36]

With this in mind, we can now examine the final module in the play, following the strophic song at 1470–1493:

	A	B	C	
1494–1552 [*Strophe*]		Peisetaerus	Prometheus*	
1565–1693 [*Antistrophe*]	Poseidon*	Peisetaerus	Heracles*	[Triballian]
1706–1719	Herald B*	Peisetaerus		

*This role could be played by the other actor (A or C).

[35] One may compare *Rhesus* 564, where the chorus' departure is along the same *eisodos* as the entry of Odysseus and Diomedes. This likely indicates a momentary pause in the action as the stage remains empty. It seems the effect was not adopted widely.

[36] MacDowell (1994) 330. Had Aristophanes desired, he could certainly have brought Euelpides back to the stage. Whatever the reason for Aristophanes' decision to include *Birds* 837–847 as part of the design of his play, the passage calls attention either (a) to the absence when a fourth actor is available, or (b) to the absence which is determined by the Rule's existence (as would be known to the audience). The latter possibility is more easily interpretable alongside Aristophanes' metatheatrical humour in other plays.

The final module comprises three scenes. Two of them follow our expected pattern of two-character exchanges, and my assignment of Prometheus to Actor C and the Herald to actor A is essentially arbitrary (though A had played the Herald earlier, and it is possible that they are to be seen as the same individual).[37] Nestled between two strophes, however, is a scene where a delegation is sent by the gods to Peisetaerus. In some ways this provides a possible comparandum for the lost delegation scenes in *Gerytades* and *Demes*. The delegation comprises Poseidon, Heracles, and a Triballian god, all of whom apparently speak, as does Peisetaerus. As MacDowell writes, arguing against Pickard-Cambridge, "The Triballian utters only three very short speeches in bad Greek, but the last of them at least is quite intelligible (1678–1679), and there is no good reason why the actor who speaks them should not be regarded as a speaking actor" ((1994) 331).

I believe on the contrary that there are good reasons. While the final sentence (1678–1679) may be comprehensible in the manuscripts (unlike the Triballian's previous utterances at 1615 and 1628–1629), it emphatically need not be comprehensible to the audience: as with the Triballian's other lines, it is immediately interpreted by Heracles, in this case with the phrase *paradounai legei* (1679 "He says hand her over"). Nothing the Triballian says needs to be understood by the audience (the barbarian speech is always interpreted), and so it comes to a balance between the unexplained absence of Euelpides on the one hand, and who speaks three incomprehensible lines on the other. In 1997 I suggested that the lines were in fact spoken by the Heracles actor, in the same sort of ventriloquism that Aristophanes must have used in *Lysistrata* with Cinesias' baby (*Lys*. 879). The Triballian thus becomes an exact parallel for Pseudartabas in *Acharnians*, as a fourth body on stage is given barbarian, incomprehensible speech voiced by one of the three actors who were permitted to speak by the rules of the competition. I continue to prefer this to the notion of an apprentice actor, in part since the role would otherwise require a line to be divided mid-verse between actors for that performer's only lines. More important, though, is that however the Triballian's lines were delivered, the need for a fourth actor in *Birds* cannot be pinned to this role.

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37 Dunbar (1995) 15 and 744 identifies this speaker as the same Herald who had appeared at 1271–1307. Regardless of whether this is meant to be the same herald or a different one, it seems likely the actor is the same.

IV. *Demands on Actors*

The assignment of parts among actors is not, however, simply a game to be sorted out with a pencil and paper. Tables such as the ones we have been looking at are only representations of the actual expectations placed upon performers in the comic competition. Any hypothesis has to make sense both for the narrative and in terms of the demands placed upon the actual actors.[38] Such demands are not restricted to the time allowed for a costume change, however. There are many ways that the demands on the performers can be measured, and thinking about them from the actor's point of view can reveal further aspects of ancient doubling. We can begin with Peisetaerus, who is played by one actor, and is the only role that actor plays in the comedy. Peisetaerus is one of the most demanding roles in Aristophanes: he speaks roughly 570 lines (if we lump iambic with sung lines together), a total exceeded only by Trygaeus in *Peace*, who speaks about 600; Dicaeopolis comes third with around 550 lines.[39] The smallest lead roles, on the other hand, both come from the plays of 411, 370 in *Lysistrata* and 350 for the Kinsman in *Thesmophoriazusae*. Counting lines in this way means reckoning a large number of partial lines, etc., and these numbers can only be approximate. So as not to skew the data towards my own conclusions, most of these numbers come from Russo; what follows is a sort of meta-analysis of Russo's statistics.

However, different principles of reckoning can produce different numbers, depending on the text consulted, how one deals with half-lines, lyric, etc. By my count, the divisions in *Birds* for which I argued in the previous section yield the following totals for the three actors. Actor B, playing only Peisetaerus, delivers 638 lines, with 313 distinct speeches (and therefore 313 cues). Actor A delivers 332 lines with 162 cues; actor C delivers 302 lines and 180 cues. Nevertheless, two things should be clear. First, there is no means to divide the roles that bring actors A and C anywhere near the demands being placed on B (Peisetaerus), and reversing parts freely between actors A and C, if desired, does not meaningfully change this picture. Secondly, removing the Triballian from C does not make acting the part noticeably different in any way. Though these numbers do differ from those in Russo, the ratios are similar enough that the conclusions are clear, and we may proceed using Russo.

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[38] Russo 1994 does some of this, and see Dover (1968) lxxvii–lxxx.
[39] These numbers are taken from Russo (1994) 163, 136, 70.

If we look at the ten performed plays, excluding *Clouds* (as Russo does), we have a range for the lead actor (whom we may think of as the protagonist) of between 350 and 600 lines, with a mean of 471 and a median of 467.[40] There is no sense of chronological development or differences depending on the festival in which the play was performed; some parts were simply larger than others. Only with *Frogs* (where the Dionysus actor speaks roughly 390 lines) does another actor speak a greater number of lines than the largest single role. Indeed, Russo's division for *Frogs* between three actors (excluding his use of apprentices) is the most equal of all the plays: 390, 370, and 395 lines. Except for *Frogs*, it is always the case that the lead actor speaks significantly more lines than any of his colleagues. The range for the other actors, given Russo's role assignments, is between 60, in *Peace*, to 435, for the Euelpides actor in *Birds* (and, as we have seen, there are ways to make this number larger still, but we'll leave that to the side for now). For these actors the mean is 285 lines, and the median 297. The demands placed on the second and third actor in terms of the number of lines delivered, then, is on average just over 60 % of what is expected of the lead actor, and again there is considerable variation: Russo (1994) 136 notes the comparative inactivity of the so-called third actor in *Peace* and *Clouds*: like *Birds*, these plays are apparently built around two-speaker scenes. The demands placed on the *koryphaios* exceed what is asked of either the second or third actors in *Acharnians*, *Wasps*, *Peace*, and *Birds*; additionally the total for the *koryphaios* exceeds the mean and median for the non-protagonists in *Knights* and *Frogs*. We can also compare these figures with the demands placed on actors in tragedy: the lead actor in Aristophanes is typically learning 50–60 % of the lines expected of the lead actor in *The Oresteia*.[41]

If one is going to oppose the assignment of roles in Old Comedy to only Three Actors, one cannot do so on this basis alone: when actors double roles, they are often assigned significantly fewer lines (perhaps as a form of compensation, perhaps simply as a contingency of narrative demands). The amount of total stage time given to all three can end up roughly equal. By any account, there are different qualities that are sought in an actor, as in the case

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40 Because these numbers are close to each other, the weighting is not likely to be distorted. Russo (1994) 215 calls the actor who plays Xanthias and Aeschylus the protagonist ("first actor") in *Frogs* because the total number of lines is larger, but for consistency I consider the allocation involving the fewest changes (in this case, Dionysus) to be the protagonist.

41 Marshall 2003 argues that the three actors apart from the chorus in *The Oresteia* speak 850, 805, and 397 lines, excluding the satyr play *Proteus*. It should also be remembered that tragedies apparently do get longer in the last two decades of the fifth century.

of tragedy, but all the plays exhibit a remarkable consistency in what those demands are. Another measure we may choose to include is the number of discrete speeches an actor has to learn, which will correspond to the number of cues he has. By this measure in *Birds*, Peisetaerus is the most exacting role, with 313 cues. In contrast, the Trygaeus actor as 244 cues, Dicaeopolis has 209, and Strepsiades (according to the surviving text of *Clouds*) has 282. Cues are one measure by which the demands of comic actors can be seen to be comparable, and even to exceed, those of tragic actors.

What should we conclude from this? For one thing, it becomes clear that employing four or more actors does not change the nature of the demands on the actors in performance. Even if we were to try to divide roles exclusively with a goal of creating equity, the prominent size of a few roles means it would not be possible meaningfully to change the nature of the demands placed on the secondary actors, and in most cases, it would have no effect on the demands on the lead actors. So increasing the number of speaking actors does not make things meaningfully easier for the three already there. Indeed, increasing the number of actors can increase and complicate the demands on backstage movement, when the role economy that emerges from most plays is lost.[42]

Further, the example of *Birds* allows us to eliminate from consideration the possibility that the fourth actor was an apprentice of some kind. If we follow Russo and Dunbar (who in turn are following a tradition that goes back to Beer 1844), the assignment of only the Triballian to the fourth actor serves no value as an apprenticeship: the size of the role (three unintelligible lines, and three cues) represents roughly one percent of what is typically expected of the second and third actors, and just over half a percent of what

42 There are ways to make it harder for the actors and the audience, of course. Sifakis 1995 proposes that part-splitting was regularly applied to fifth-century texts, and that the protagonist hops between roles from one scene to the next. Part-splitting was apparently sometime used in the classical period (*Oedipus at Colonus*, *Wealth*, and Menander), but there is no reason to think that it was ever introduced when not required by the Rule of Three Actors. It offers no perceptible theatrical benefit from its implementation (the virtuosity of an individual playing multiple roles is present regardless), and undermines the possibility of a cohesive meaning to be gained from a character, a play, or a tetralogy, in favour of showcasing declamation. It would also increase the demands of backstage logistics, as costumes and masks need to be passed from one actor to another, which increases both the time between scenes and the amount of backstage movement. Further, the introduction of part-splitting requires the audience to perceive the actor/character distinction. I would argue for a heterogeneous appreciation of any effect, instead of an expected effect that the audience may only selectively be able to follow.

the lead actor must do. The pedagogical value of such an experience for a fledgling actor is questionable, since what would be asked is so far removed from what any of the three competing actors, or the *koryphaios*, or any of the choristers, are expected to do.[43]

V. *Why It Matters*

Where does this leave us? None of the three possibilities can be certainly eliminated, either a hard limit of three speaking actors, a hard limit of four, or a soft limit. My hope nonetheless is that this argument has shifted the ground. Whatever supposed problems may exist with only three speaking actors must be measured against the increased inefficiencies of actor demands, backstage movement, and theatrical clarity. To my knowledge, no one has answered MacDowell's arguments in favour of a hard limit over a soft one: so much of the comic competition is unknown, but it seems rash to discard what we do know to have been operating. Given the prestige associated with dramatic victory (as documented by P. Wilson 2000, for example), it seems specious to suggest that roles such as the Triballian were an attempt to somehow secretly circumvent competitive regulations. If a playwright were to desire to circumvent the rules, one would expect him to come up with something a little more obvious than three mumbled lines. Go big or go home (as they say): compare Euripides' satyrless satyr play *Alcestis* in 438—there is something that gets noticed (and, unsurprisingly, does not win, though the tetralogy continues to have jokes made about it into the fourth century).

If there were circumstances where four or more actors were permitted, Old Comedy simply would not look like it does. A hard Rule of Three Actors removes this aspect of disappointment, and allows the comic playwrights opportunities to demonstrate their clever manipulation of limited resources. We have come a long way since the days when doubling was seen as an arbitrary straightjacket poets imposed upon themselves, or something that perhaps was needed to make sense of actors wearing masks (an argument, incidentally, that becomes circular, for masks are then justified as necessary because of the role doubling). Nor is there any sense that the audience is incapable of handling a scene with more than three actors in a masked theatre tradition, as the rich examples from Roman comedy (for which there was no

[43] This is only an argument against apprenticeships, however, and is not in itself an argument that small parts did not exist.

actor limit) demonstrates. In Plautus and Terence, we regularly see four-actor scenes, often involving eavesdropping. By my account, Roman comedy presents a development in the narrative tradition that was unlikely to exist before the competition rules were no longer operating.

When plays were presented in competition (and this would be true for tragedy as well), playwrights were allocated notionally equal resources, which included a slate of three actors, paid for by the state. The playwright was also assigned a *khorēgos*, who would be responsible for hiring a chorus trainer, paying for all expenses related to the chorus and the *koryphaios* (including room and board during the rehearsal period), costumes, props, and any stage dressing that may have been required. He was also responsible for the costs associated with any unspeaking performers: extras, attendants, children, stage hands, etc. With each of these variables, Old Comedy provides a rich resource for how money could be spent, to enable spectacular effects. The *didaskalos* seems to have been the choice of the playwright: that would explain how Aristophanes can choose to work with the same partners time and time again. What seems not to be subject to pecuniary negotiations with the *chorêgos* is the number of speaking actors. While we can see evidence of the creative and aggressive use of the limitations (particularly if the hard limit is only three), we are faced with an unimaginative response in this one area of performance alone if no limit existed.

A further variable is the number of good comic actors in Athens. At the Dionysia, when there were three tragedians competing, nine speaking actors were required annually.[44] This is nowhere near the total requirement of on-stage personnel, which includes the *koryphaios*, the chorus, and all the unspeaking extras. But nine actors are foregrounded, and (at least in the second half of the century) participate in the competition for actors. In comedy, there are three or five competing poets.[45] If we adopt MacDowell's position, this means that there are annual requirements for either 12 or 20 speaking comic actors annually at the Dionysia (and, while there may be some overlap between them, an additional 12 to 20 required for the Lenaia).[46]

44 It is very probable that the same actors acted in all four plays in a tetralogy: no evidence suggests otherwise (Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 94).

45 Storey 2002 argues for a reduced number of competitors during the war, against Luppe 1972 (and see Dunbar (1995) 480–481); it is certain, however, that at least some of the time, there were five competitors.

46 We do not know if it was possible for an actor to perform at more than one festival in a given year (the limitation would be due to practical issues of rehearsal time rather than

Similar numbers are required with a soft limit. Considerably greater comic acting talent in Athens, on a year-by-year basis, is required if the Rule of Three Actors is not observed in comedy as it was in tragedy. While the number of lines to be memorized is roughly half that of a tragic actor, we cannot simply say that the demands on performance were similarly halved: comic actors are responsible for many more cues, and many more lines begun mid-verse, to say nothing of the physical demands of performing slapstick and polymetric cantica. So if we prefer something other than a comic Rule of Three Actors (which still requires either 9 or 15 speaking comic actors at each festival) we need to explain why there were so many more working comic actors as there were tragic ones in Athens.

This leads to a third variable. While we today are in doubt as to what the staging convention was, in fifth-century Athens there was no corresponding doubt. The playwrights and the actors, and all the theatre professionals, knew what the regulations were, and acted accordingly. *Birds* demonstrates that if the assumption is that it is a three-actor play, then a great many implied stage directions emerge automatically from the text, so that the play becomes easier to visualize than if the assumption is that there were four or an indeterminate number. The presence of a hard Rule of Three Actors works alongside the modular design at the level of the narrative, in order to provide a clear theatrical structure to the events depicted.

The nature of these arguments could be strengthened if we begin to look at the specific nature of the roles doubled. The opportunities for creative interpretation of characters, of juxtaposition, of exhibiting a range of dialectical and delivery styles, etc., all enhance what the actor can give to the performance. Regardless of the degree of awareness of the actor beneath the mask and costume, there must be recognition at some level by the audience when an actor doubles roles. While not every member of the audience would necessarily be fully aware of all the doubling occurring,[47] due to the high level of individual participation in the competitions (with 1,000 singers annually competing in dithyrambs at the Dionysia alone), a fair degree of

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any strict prohibition, I suspect), and consequently we cannot say whether we should add to this number the actors at (at least) the Lenaia as well. Assuming the Rule of Three Actors was also operating at the Lenaia, that could add up to six more tragic actors (and double the number of comic actors), but there are too many suppositions to do anything useful with this information. The numbers given here therefore represent minima.

[47] Indeed, it may have been more extensive still: Russo (1994) 73 argues that in *Acharnians* one character switches from a speaking actor to an extra and back. Similar claims are made for role allocation in *Clouds* (92–97) and *Lysistrata* (181–185).

theatrical sophistication may be assumed by the playwrights. Using three actors for Aristophanes remains the "best fit" for the evidence concerning role assignment. As the examination of demands on actors demonstrated, the workload assigned to additional actors is essentially trivial, with no clear benefit accruing. Such a conclusion does have implications, such as the modular structure of *Birds*, which reveals a play with many implicit stage directions that exist only if three actors were used. This is not proof, nor can it be. It should however establish a set of concerns that can be addressed directly, without unqualified appeals to "common sense" solutions that coincide with modern, naturalistic western theatre. We should see the Rule of Three Actors as one means by which Athenian playwrights in tragedy and comedy were able to demonstrate their sophisticated dramaturgical skills and rewards the audience's nuanced appreciation of the aggressive use of theatre resources in Athens.

‘THE ODEION ON HIS HEAD’: COSTUME AND IDENTITY IN CRATINUS’ *THRACIAN WOMEN* FR. 73, AND CRATINUS’ TECHNIQUES OF POLITICAL SATIRE

Jeffrey S. Rusten

I. *The Form of Cratinus’ Attacks on Pericles*

Cratinus was considered the first political satirist of ancient comedy (test 17, 19 Kassel-Austin = Rusten (2010) 177), especially in his constant attacks on Pericles (*Dionysalexandros* test. 1, frs. 73, 118, 171, 258–259, 324, 326). These are attested foremost in numerous fragments cited in Plutarch’s *Life of Pericles*, though it is important to remember that Plutarch’s Old Comedy citations are not derived from study of the texts of full plays, but from previous excerptors of Pericles-related comic citations.[1]

Yet none of Cratinus’ twenty-nine preserved titles is overtly political, nor do any of them hint at a contemporary subject (with the notable exception of *Pytine*, about himself). The most frequent titles are in the category of literature (*Archilochuses, Odysseuses, Cleoboulinas*) and especially myth (*Dionysuses, Dionysalexandros, Nemesis, Plutuses*), and Bakola has argued for his persistent and widespread adaptation of forms from Aeschylean tragedy and satyr play, as well as a strong individual authorial persona, as the basis of his compositional profile.[2]

Assuming that it is correct that Pericles was Cratinus’ special bête noire,[3] how can Cratinus have satirized him so frequently when not a single one of his plots seems able to accommodate him directly? This is in sharp contrast to the ‘demagogue-comedies’ of the later fifth century influenced by Aristophanes’ *Knights*, like Eupolis’ *Maricas* and Platon’s *Hyperbolus*,

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[1] Uxkull-Gyllenband (1927) 7–29, Stadter (1989) xliv–liiii, noted for the present fragment especially by Miller (1997) 224. For Plutarch’s distaste for old comedy as anything but a historical source see *Table Talk* 7.8 711F = Rusten (2010) 83 Nr. 7.

[2] Bakola 2009, see also Guidorizzi 2006.

[3] So Pieters 1946; Rosen 1988; Vickers 1997; McGlew 2006.

Peisander and *Cleophon*[4] This question is brought to the fore especially in one fragment which is universally—and, I think, wrongly—assumed to prove that Cratinus *did* bring Pericles as a character on stage.

II. *Cratinus'* Thracian Women*, Fr. 73*

PCG Cratinus fr. 73, cited by Plutarch, is usually printed and translated as follows:

> Plutarch, *Pericles* 13.9–10: τὸ δ' Ὠιδεῖον, τῇ μὲν ἐντὸς διαθέσει πολύεδρον καὶ πολύστυλον, τῇ δ' ἐρέψει περικλινὲς καὶ κάταντες ἐκ μιᾶς κορυφῆς πεποιημένον, εἰκόνα λέγουσι γενέσθαι καὶ μίμημα τῆς βασιλέως σκηνῆς, ἐπιστατοῦντος καὶ τούτῳ Περικλέους. διὸ καὶ πάλιν Κρατῖνος ἐν Θρᾴτταις παίζει πρὸς αὐτόν·
>
> ὁ σχινοκέφαλος Ζεὺς ὁδὶ προσέρχεται
> ὁ Περικλέης, τᾠδεῖον ἐπὶ τοῦ κρανίου
> ἔχων, ἐπειδὴ τοὔστρακον παροίχεται.
>
> Plutarch, *Life of Pericles* 13.9–10: They say that the Odeion, in its interior arrangement with many seats and columns, and with its roof constructed to slope uphill to a single peak, is modeled in imitation of the pavilion of the king of Persia, and Pericles supervised this too. That is why Cratinus once again mocks him in *Thracian Women*:
>
> Here comes Zeus of the onion-head,
> Pericles, with the Odeion on his cranium,
> now that the ballot on ostracism is past.

This fragment has by no means been neglected by scholars; but like Plutarch, they all without exception assume the following:

1) that the character whose entry is announced (for ὁδὶ προσέρχεται PCG compare *Knights* 146, *Plutus* 1038, *Wasps* 1324, *Lysistrata* 77) is Pericles, stated most decisively by PCG in the introduction to the play: 'prodiit in scaena Pericles,' (on fr. 73 their reference to Pollux 4.143 implies they think this fragment is evidence for a portrait-mask).
2) that the passage gives us some sort of information about
   a) the appearance of the Odeion, and
   b) a *terminus post quem* for its construction.

On the latter two points, however, numerous discussions have produced nothing conclusive: initial speculation that the structure was circular with

[4] Sommerstein 2000.

conical roof has been countered with archaeological evidence that the actual Odeion was rectilinear and pyramid-roofed;[5] likewise, an original assumption of an early date, based on the ostracism of 443/2 that expelled Pericles' opponent Thucydides son of Melesias, has been dismissed by those who note that a vote on whether to hold an ostracism occurred every year in January or February.[6]

Rather than focusing on tangential and equivocal evidence on the chronology of Pericles' building program or the Odeion's shape, we can more reasonably look at what the audience is directed to view—the character's headgear—as an important visual clue to his identity. Once this identity has been established, we can read the fragment's relation to Pericles as more complex than simply 'Ζεὺς appellatur Pericles' (so PCG), and as indicative of a frequently attested technique of Cratinus' political satire.

III. *Zeus'* Polos *in Vase-Paintings of Greek Comedy*

No discussion of the text has asked what it is that the character is supposed to be actually wearing on his head, or why he should be wearing any headgear at all.[7] The only nods to the question are the minimal remarks by Davison (1958) 34 ('‘Work on the Odeion must have been completed … or why would Pericles be wearing it as a hat'?') or Miller (1997) 219–220, who calls the fragment a "reworking of the familiar comic joke about the odd shape of Pericles' head" as 'a novel form of headgear', and a 'comic cap'.

Yet when it comes to the costume of Old and Middle Comedy we have a substantial resource in the numerous comedy vases of fourth-century Magna Graecia, combined with a few even from late fifth-century Attica. In the words of Green, there are "roughly 112 surviving examples of comic scenes—

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5 See especially Miller (1997) 218–226.

6 Hose (1993), summarizing Geissler (1969) and Schwarze (1971) among others. A connection with an annual vote on ostracism early in the year might at least indicate the play was performed not at the Dionysia in January but the Lenaea in March, where comedy was introduced ca. 444–441 BCE and which was definitely the more political venue (Rusten (2006) 25–26). I am ignoring the controversy over Plutarch's following comments on the date of Pericles' changes to the Panathenaea (see Robkin (1976) 36 ff. and Hose 1993), since they have nothing to do with the words of Cratinus.

7 After writing this essay I noticed that Revermann (2006a) 302–305 anticipated me in noting the relevance of the polos of Zeus, but still postulates the character's identity as "Pericles-Zeus" and suggests (303–305) that the crown is modeled after the Odeion (which doesn't strike me as necessary for the joke).

and here I mean by a comic scene one that includes two or more identifiable actors—Apulian (Tarentine) 74; Lucanian 2; Sicilian 16; Campanian 9; Paestan 12."[8] These are not just pictures of individual actors or masks, but remarkably evocative scenes, which, unlike most tragic vases, show the figures in their theatrical setting.[9] In most cases, they do not illustrate stories from the Greek comedies, but attempt to reproduce the experience of watching a play on stage. Despite a slight displacement chronologically and geographically, these images have been demonstrated to bear connections with the staging of Attic Old Comedy as well: Csapo and Taplin have shown that one of them depicts a scene from Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae* (Rusten [2010] 435 Nr. 1); and a number of Attic precursors from the late fifth century still exist, most notably a splendid Attic chous now in the Hermitage Museum depicting in great detail the costumes, masks and props of a performance of Old Comedy.[10]

The comic masks in these scenes (indeed in all art relating to Old and Middle Comedy) have been systematically categorized by Webster and Green in an attempt to reconstruct a repertory of mask-types by age, gender, social status and comic role.[11] The results are not entirely conclusive, and have been critiqued on the assumption that comic masking (and its translation into art) are unlikely to have been reducible to a simple scheme.[12] But there is one category of character—gods—who are much more recognizable from costume and mask than any others. Among these the most frequent is Heracles, with his trademark club and lionskin, and he appears in *Birds* and *Frogs*; the next most frequent in art is Zeus, recognizable often from his scepter and thunderbolt, but even more so from his comic headgear, the *polos*, a ridiculous little projecting crown in the center of his masked head, unattested in serious Zeus-portraits.[13] There are seven clear visual examples, two of them late fifth-century Attic:

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[8] Green (2001) 38 with note 2.

[9] For a selection and bibliography see Rusten (2010) Chapter 11.

[10] Rusten forthcoming; one could add the terracottas, for which see Rusten (2010) 14–15 and 430–433.

[11] See Rusten (2010) 426–428.

[12] See Wiles 2008 and Marshall 1999.

[13] *LIMC* VIII.1, s.v. 'Zeus' nos. 221–223, pp. 342–343, 346 (Iphigeneia Leventi). It is normally worn only by goddesses: see V.K. Müller 1915. *Pace* Leventi Nr 220, there is no reason to think the isolated Gnathia figure wearing a *polos* and carrying a torch on Taranto 4646 (8953) (late 3rd century, Konnakis group = Trendall (1967) 81 Nr. 183) is Zeus. The only comic Zeus known to me without a polos is the eagle-holding figure on stage in Bari 2970, = Trendall (1967) 27 Nr. 17, Rusten (2010) 436 Nr. 4 (with illustration).

Figure 1. Dirce painter, Sicilian red figure kalyx krater, 380–360 BCE, Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional 11026 (L. 388) = Trendall (1967) 53 Nr. 82.

Figure 2. Fragment of a red figure Apulian bell krater, early 4th century BCE, Museo Nazionale, Taranto 121613 = Trendall (1967) 45 Nr. 61. Zeus with *polos* and staff sits huddled in a chair on a stage with Dionysus (also with a *polos*) holding a thyrsus to his left.

Figure 3. Red figure Apulian bell-krater, by the Cotugno painter, ca. 380, Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum 96.AE.113 (ex coll. Fleischman F 313) = Rusten (2010) 437 Nr. 5 (not in Trendall 1967), Green (2001) catalogue Nr. 11 (2003) 125 n. 22. Zeus (mask G, with *polos* and eagle-scepter) runs to embrace a "girl", with *stolē* billowing over his head, whose face he does not yet see; to left, a slave (mask ZA) "stage-naked", stands confidently with hand on hip holding a rod.

Figure 4. Paestan bell-krater by Asteas, ca. 350–340, Vatican U 19 (inv. 17106), Trendall (1967) Nr. 65, Green (2003) 127 n. 30. (= Rusten (2010) 438 Nr. 6). Zeus (mask G, wearing tiny crown) sticks his head through a ladder as he carries it, to his right Hermes (mask Z, with caduceus and petasos) starts to point to the window between them, where a young woman (Alcmena? Danae?) looks out.

Figure 5. Apulian bell krater, by the Iris painter, ca. 370–360, St Petersburg, Hermitage State Museum, 299, Trendall (1967) Nr. 31, Green (2003) 126 n. 27. = Rusten (2010) 438–439 Nr. 8. Heracles (mask J) drops into his mouth food from a sacrificial basket which he holds in his left hand. To left, Zeus (Mask G) with crown and eagle scepter sits on a high altar raising a thunderbolt; to right, white-haired caped man (mask L) has turned his back on Heracles to raise an amphora over a fountain.

Figure 6. The Phanagoria chous Attic red figure *Chous*, 425–375 BCE, St Petersburg, Hermitage State Museum, Phi 1869.47 (Rusten forthcoming) = Rusten (2010) 429–430 Nr. 100. In the central scene, three young men, dressing as comic characters with padded undergarments and phalluses, each holds an old man's mask in his hand. The leftmost mask (Green's Mask G) wears a *polos*.

Figure 7. Attic red-figure stemmed plate fragment by the Painter of Ferrara from Spina, late 5th – early 4th century BC, Ferrara, Museo archeologico nazionale inv. 29307 = *ARV*² = Beazley (1963) 1306/8, Webster (1978) AV1.

There are also two Attic examples from the late fifth century BCE, each depicting in isolation a large-nosed mask with chin-beard (mask G) wearing a polos depicted that can plausibly be identified as Zeus.

In all these cases Zeus' *polos* marks him as a comic king, sometimes as an adulterer (Nr. 3–4,),[14] sometimes as an ineffectual blusterer (Nr. 1, 2, 5).[15] Against this background, it would be perverse not to assume that the entering character with notable headgear in Cratinus fr. 73 is identifiable as a *polos*-wearing Zeus—especially since that is who the speaker says he is.[16]

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[14] Cf. scholia *Peace* 741, scholia *Birds* 568, *TrGF* Adespota 619.

[15] Green 2003 argues that mask G is in itself a pompously ridiculous character.

[16] Since nothing is known of *Thracian Women's* plot, it is not immediately apparent why Zeus might be walking on stage in it. It is a plausible guess (though without support from the fragments) that it concerned the Thracian cult of Bendis established at Athens in the early 420's Delneri 2006 and Planeaux 2000–2001. In such a context neither Pericles nor Zeus has an obvious role, but Aristophanes' usage shows that gods and heroes can plausibly make fleeting appearances in otherwise unrelated plots (*Peace, Birds, Frogs*)—a sudden appearance

IV. *Cratinus' Onomastic Satire*

But if he is Zeus, why does the comment on his entrance contain so many obvious references to Pericles—the *polos* facetiously identified as his Odeion, the adjective "onion-headed", and above all, his actual name? Cobet (1873) 371 thought that naming the target outright ruined the joke and proposed to delete it, but we need not go that far, since it need not be understood as a name at all, as we can see from another fragment of Cratinus that is mythically framed but politically charged. *Cheirones* fr. 259 is usually printed and translated thus:

> Plutarch, *Life of Pericles* 24.9 ἐν δὲ ταῖς κωμῳδίαις Ὀμφάλη τε νέα καὶ Δηάνειρα καὶ πάλιν Ἥρα προσαγορεύεται. Κρατῖνος δ' ἄντικρυς παλλακὴν αὐτὴν εἴρηκεν ἐν τούτοις:
>
> Ἥραν τέ οἱ Ἀσπασίαν
> τίκτει Καταπυγοσύνη
> παλλακὴν κυνώπιδα.
>
> Plutarch, *Life of Pericles* 24.9 (on Aspasia) In comedies she is called "new Omphale" and "Deianeira" and "Hera" as well. Cratinus comes right out and calls her a whore in these words:
>
> And the goddess of the well-reamed ass
> bore Hera, Aspasia,
> a bitch-faced[17] whore.

Here we find a matching pair of divine-political names. Has Cratinus melded into a single unit 'Aspasia-Hera' to match 'Pericles-Zeus' (so McGlew (2002) 44–45)?

Such a desperate solution ignores the fact that the names of both Pericles and Aspasia were substantivized adjectives as well as names, and can be written and understood both in upper- and lower-case. Thus *Katapygosyne* can have given birth to "A Hera to gladden one's heart (*aspasian*)" and fr. 73 can be translated:

> Here comes Zeus of the onion-head,
> with the Odeion on his cranium,
> the one full of glory (*ho perikleês*),[18]
> now that the vote on ostracism is past

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by Pericles is rather harder to motivate, *pace* McGlew (2002) 46, who imagines "occasional appearances [by Pericles] in plays whose narratives ultimately pursued unrelated directions."

17 Also used of Hera by Hephaestus, *Iliad* 18.396, and of Helen by herself, *Iliad* 3.180.

18 Cf. Ibycus fr. 1.1–3 (PMG 282 APage): Δαρδανίδα Πριάμοιο μέγ' ἄς]τυ περικλεὲς ὄλβιον.

Similarly the comic writer Theopompus in the early fourth century implied that Callistratus of Aphidna's attempt to bribe the judge of the dead actually were directed to a political figure (*PCG* fr. 31, the meter is dactylic hexameter):

> Athenaeus 11.485C (after Theopompus fr. 41, in a nest of citations on the deep drinking-goblet called *Lepastê*) καὶ ἐν Μήδῳ·
>
> ὥς ποτ' ἐκήλησεν Καλλίστρατος υἷας 'Αχαιῶν,
> κέρμα φίλον διαδούς, ὅτε συμμαχίαν ἐρέεινεν·
> οἷον δ' οὐ κήλησε δέμας λεπτὸν 'Ραδάμανθυν
> λύσανδρον κώθωνι, πρὶν αὐτῷ δῶκε λεπαστήν.
>
> Athenaeus 11.485C … and in the *Mede*:
>
> In such wise once Callistratus entranced the sons of the Achaeans,
> giving them dear cash, when he an alliance did seek.
> Alone he failed to entrance Rhadamanthys slight in body,
> the man-loosener, with a flask—not until he gave him a Lepastê.

Rhadamanthys' appropriate epithet 'the man-loosener' might also be the name Lysander.[19]

In *Thracian Women* fr. 73, as in *Cheirones* and Theopompus' *Mede*, a god is the primary reference but a human name is appended as an adjective, and especially in *Thracian Women* Zeus is loaded with so many descriptive elements that belong to Pericles that the audience's initial visual identification of Zeus is repeatedly undermined by his real reference.[20]

Here we see a specific instance of the Cratinean method famously termed ἔμφασις, in this case meaning "indirect presentation" by the hypothesis-writer to *Dionysalexandros*.[21] Cratinus did not shrink from using names of contemporaries in many of his plays. But when it comes to his bête noire

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19 Though evidently not the Spartan general, who was killed in 395 (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.5.19). Unlike Pericles and Aspasia, λύσανδρος is never actually attested as an adjective rather than a name, and so, like PCG, S.D. Olson in the new Loeb Athenaeus capitalizes it and translates 'Rhadamanthys—that's Lysander.' PCG note that Kaibel's unpublished manuscript took it as an adjective, and a parallel case is λυσιμάχη, used in the classical period as an adjective only in the famously ambiguous instances Aristophanes *Peace* 992 and *Lysistrata* 554, on which see Lewis 1997. Vayos Liapis prefers to take Bergk's emendation κώθωνα with the adjective (compare λυσιμελής of wine), and translates 'The only man he could not entrance was Rhadamanthys slight in body, | Not before he gave him a man-loosening drinking cup (κώθωνα), namely a *lepastê*.' Thus "The joke is that C. couldn't bribe Rh. with money [as he did the Achaeans], but did manage to bribe him with a big pitcher of wine."

20 Revermann 1997 by contrast argues that in *Dionysalexandros* the verbal identification of the characters may have been undermined by the visual similarity of the ram-Dionysus to the large head of Pericles.

21 See especially Dobrov (2010) 366–369, with extensive bibliography of previous discussions.

Pericles, there is no evidence that he ever needed to put him or any other political figure on stage, or even identify him unambigiously, to mock him. In another theogonic fragment of *Cheirones* (fr. 258) we encounter again a Zeus who is redolent of Pericles:

> Plutarch, *Pericles* 3.3–4: ἔτεκε Περικλέα, τὰ μὲν ἄλλα τὴν ἰδέαν τοῦ σώματος ἄμεμπτον, προμήκη δὲ τῇ κεφαλῇ καὶ ἀσύμμετρον. ὅθεν αἱ μὲν εἰκόνες αὐτοῦ σχεδὸν ἅπασαι κράνεσι περιέχονται, μὴ βουλομένων ὡς ἔοικε τῶν τεχνιτῶν ἐξονειδίζειν. οἱ δ' Ἀττικοὶ ποιηταὶ σχινοκέφαλον αὐτὸν ἐκάλουν· τὴν γὰρ σκίλλαν ἔστιν ὅτε καὶ σχῖνον ὀνομάζουσι. τῶν δὲ κωμικῶν ὁ μὲν Κρατῖνος ἐν Χείρωσι:
>
> Στάσις δὲ καὶ πρεσβυγενὴς Κρόνος ἀλλήλοισι μιγέντε
> μέγιστον τίκτετον τύραννον,
> ὃν δὴ κεφαληγερέταν θεοὶ καλέουσιν.[22]
>
> Plutarch, *Life of Pericles* 3.4: She gave birth to Pericles, in other respects faultless in appearance, but elongated and asymmetrical in his head. Therefore nearly all the likenesses of him are attached to helmets, evidently because the artists were unwilling to shame him. The Attic poets called him 'squill-headed', for the squill and the onion are the same. Among the comic poets, Cratinus in *Cheirons* says:
>
> Faction and venerable Time
> joined in love[23] and bore
> the greatest of all tyrants;
> him the immortals[24] called
> their Head Man.

Bakola (2009) 180–229 has recently argued (with reference to *Dionysalexandros, Ploutoi, Nemesis*, and *Seriphians*, but not mentioning this fragment) that infusing a plot that is primarily mythical with persistent elements of political satire is a characteristically Cratinean technique. Perhaps his practice stems from having spent his earlier career under the constraint of a decree banning explicit portrayals of actual persons in a comedy (439–437, see Rusten (2010) 89 Nr. 21; Rusten (2006) 25–26); but in any case, it seems that there is only one case where Cratinus (unlike Aristophanes and Eupolis) definitely portrayed a real person on stage, and that was himself, in *Pytine*.

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22 The meter is lyric iambic, "burlesque of Aeschylus," L.P.E. Parker (1997) 31.

23 The diction of this fragment and the next (but not the meter) mimic the genealogy of the gods in Hesiod's *Theogony*.

24 For the play on the Homeric distinction between divine (vs. human) name for someone cf. Cratinus fr. 352 and Noussia 2003.

REHEARSING ARISTOPHANES

Graham Ley

In the transition that Greek drama has undergone in the last generation from being assessed primarily as a text to being understood also as a script, the scholarly emphasis has generally fallen on production, ancient or modern.[1] In this study, I shall attempt something slightly different, which is to consider ancient theatrical production from the perspective of the preparation of the performance. Calling this process 'rehearsal' should set up the study in the right way, since it also raises the useful question whether or not it is legitimate and helpful to think of 'rehearsal' in relation to the fifth-century theatrical preparation. Ultimately, my aim here is to ask if different sequences in Aristophanic scripts require different kinds of preparation for production.

It is important to acknowledge that the ancient sources pointing to Greek theatrical preparation and rehearsal are few and far between, and that to struggle to squeeze a convincing picture exclusively out of them is probably the wrong approach.[2] The alternative is to try to achieve a balance of probability, which can at least raise the question "If it did not work like this, then how did it work?".[3] With theatre-making that is always a valid question, and there must be mundane answers to all questions of that kind, even if they are well hidden.

I shall start by reviewing some of the more standard building-blocks for a study of this kind, and in the course of that review I shall refer to recent work on the practice of the Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre as a stimulus to asking what I hope will be the right kind of questions, initially of Greek tragedy but also of comedy. I shall then turn my attention to the Aristophanic scripts, and see what emerges from an approach to them that has preparation

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1 Perhaps increasingly in the last decade on the modern, with the series of monographs issuing from the Archive of Greek and Roman Performance in Oxford, if by 'modern' one would mean from the Renaissance forwards: consider, as a fine example, the intricate theatrical history revealed in Hall, Macintosh & Taplin (2000) along with a reception study of three of Aristophanes' comedies in Hall & Wrigley (2007).

2 Some of them, those from the Byzantine era, are not very 'ancient' at all, and yet they are often amalgamated with evidence drawn from classical Greek authors or inscriptions.

3 I am not advocating dispensing with the painstaking work of e.g. Pickard-Cambridge and his revising editors (1968), Csapo and Slater (1994), and P. Wilson (2000).

for performance in mind. This essay draws to an extent on earlier work I have done on the theatricality and material circumstances of ancient Greek tragedy and comedy, but heads in a rather different direction from my recent, larger study of the theatricality of Greek tragedy.[4]

Texts, Scripts and Rehearsal in Ancient Greece and Renaissance England

I referred in the beginning to an apparent dichotomy between text and script, and together with that there is a broad range of issues relating to writing and reading, literacy and orality. What matters most to the threads traced here is not the philological stability of the text as such,[5] but the intractable question of the degree to which our texts do represent scripts for performance, that may have been subsequently altered, amended, or reshaped for reading. The detection of additions and embellishments by actors who re-performed tragedies by Euripides (in particular) makes it clear that a text may shift from being one kind of script to being another, while relatively solid evidence that some Aristophanic texts are of scripts probably revised by the author himself for re-performance confirms a different kind of alteration.[6] These instances, if we become aware of them, would tend to confirm the impressions of theatricality that we carry away from reading Greek drama.

Yet if there seems to be no good reason to be profoundly suspicious of the theatricality of ancient Greek scripts, there does have to be a continuing sense of amazement that they are there at all. I am not thinking here of the extraordinary facts of transmission over centuries and millennia, but of the puzzle over their preservation in the first instance. Official intervention came in the later fourth century BC, when scripts were collected in Athens and then copied for the Greek library at Alexandria in Egypt under the rule of the Ptolemies.[7] Before that there were books for personal ownership in

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[4] Ley (2006) on the material circumstances of theatrical production, and (2007a) on the uses of costume and properties; Ley (2007b) concentrates on tragic scripts in performance.

[5] For the text of Aristophanes, see N.G. Wilson's studies (2007), which accompany his new Oxford Classical Text.

[6] Page (1934) is a foundation text for these kinds of perception; the revised text/script of Aristophanes's *Clouds* occasions the most discussion, e.g. Dover (1972) 103–105, summarizing the introduction to his edition of *Clouds* (1968) lxxx–xcviii. Revermann (2006a) has revisited the subject in his Appendix C, 326–332.

[7] Csapo and Slater (1994) 10–11, sections I.14 and 15B respectively; the latter may be the first recorded instance of the sad truth that borrowed books may never be returned, although at least Ptolemy had the good grace to supply and forfeit a deposit.

circulation, including playscripts, and the references we have (what we might call the evidence, in the absence of substantial material remains) suggest the end of the fifth century BC for an active market in book production.[8] The facts of victories at the state festivals and authorship were preserved, probably officially, and later organized by Aristotle and his school at about the same time that the scripts were collected. But how many scripts from the earlier fifth century BC survived to emerge into the public domain once books became more widespread?

There may be a plausible answer in one prestigious case, that of Aeschylus. It is likely that the plays of Aeschylus were the first examples of re-performance at Athens, with permission granted by the *demos* for productions of them after his death, and we might ally that with the knowledge that two of his sons were also involved with the theatre, Euphorion as a playwright and Euaion as an actor.[9] There would then be a good case for a preservation of scripts within the family that is also a kind of preservation within a 'profession'.[10] By the time of Aristophanes one might assume that similar principles of family and professional preservation (his son Araros was also a playwright) found themselves matched and amplified by an increasing interest in books produced for other readers.

So much is reasonably satisfactory, but the issue of preservation leads to another question about the nature of a 'script' in this era. Ancient dramatic scripts have authorship, and as far as we know the standard practice was that of single authorship. The performances are all metrical, and the script is composed in varieties of metre that are most suited to spoken delivery, song, or forms of what is variously regarded as chanting or 'recitative'.[11] Those rhythms and modes of performance are expressed in and through words,

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8 In one contemporary anecdote relating to 400 BC, the mercenary general Xenophon (of Athenian birth) remarks on seeing wrecked cargoes of books on the shore of the Hellespont, amongst other flotsam and jetsam: Xenophon *Anabasis* 7.5.14. Wise (1998) 21 marshals this and other evidence to present a thriving book culture by the end of the fifth century in Athens; by contrast, Thomas (1989) 19–20 and 32 offers a far more restricted view of the topic. Aristophanes' *Frogs* has references to books and reading, and these are discussed along with other ancient sources in Dover (1993) 34–35; see also Csapo and Slater (1994) 1–2.

9 Csapo and Slater (1994) 11–12, section I.17A–C for the re-production of plays by Aeschylus. Euaion's name is found on a number of Athenian vases from the fifth century, prompting speculation about their connection with performance: Trendall and Webster (1971) 4–5.

10 In the case of a writer/poet/composer, texts and scripts might form part of the family tradition and transmission on which Thomas (1989) *passim* rightly places such emphasis in this period.

11 For accounts of tragic scripts as compositions for voice, see Ley (2007b) 83–85; on vocal techniques in tragedy see Hall (2006) 296–304.

which appear from our scripts to be handed to the performers by the author-composer. The question that poses itself about the surviving scripts is about the role they had in the extended process from composition to production and post-production preservation. Even if we assume that our texts contain the final touches of the composer, at the post-production stage, altered or not by subsequent hands and performers, that will still not answer the question.[12] In modern production, which takes advantage of printing, we would expect multiple copies of a script for most of those involved in the production process. In productions in Renaissance England that was not the case, and I shall be considering how actors only had 'parts', while master scripts were few. What should we expect of ancient production?

Firstly, any copy would have to be by hand. A manuscript tradition carried forward in a scriptorium over many years is very different from the compressed time that we associate with the schedules for theatrical production. It is just possible that many copies might be produced by literate slaves employed in an *ergasterion* or workshop and working aurally from dictation from a master-copy.[13] If there was a book 'industry' at Athens, then it would either have worked like that or by a kind of arithmetical progression of copies from copies, all of them taken from one master copy, which would be slower and industrially less efficient in the use of labour. I have no idea whether authors themselves dictated their compositions to literate scribes (slaves) in the first instance, or whether, and to what extent, different kinds of people through the course of the fifth century in Athens had works read to them rather than reading them personally by sight, or out loud. Dionysus in Aristophanes *Frogs* supposes that he was reading a book of Euripides's *Andromeda* to/by himself, but do we assume that a fictional Dionysus is typical? I shall look a little later at the issue of timescales for the process

[12] On the status of our surviving scripts, Revermann (2006a) 95 concludes as follows: "Whatever changes happened during the rehearsal phase, there is a strong case for assuming that the preserved texts of fifth-century drama reflect an advanced stage of a play's evolution in which the experience of at least one production (and quite possibly only one production) under competitive conditions is already incorporated into the script." Csapo and Slater (1994), in addition to material drawn from *Clouds* (5–6, section I.2A–C; see also n. 6 above), present an anecdote (6, section I.5) about the comic playwright Anaxandrides, active in the middle of the fourth century BC. He was alleged to have given away the scripts of his unsuccessful comedies as wrapping-paper to incense-sellers, instead of revising the scripts (for publication) in line with the standard practice of other playwrights.

[13] I have outlined the workings of the *ergasterion* system in Ley (2006) in connection with other 'industries' at Athens; such workshops do not necessarily imply widespread distribution, or an immense 'market' in the modern sense.

of preparation and production, but it seems very unlikely that there would be much time for copying, unless plays were written not in the six to nine months before actual production, but in the previous year. That possibility would present us with a kind of theatrical 'preparation' which would be very odd, especially since theatre at Athens was dependent on the creation of (a continuing sequence of) original scripts. Would all authors be able and willing to prepare that far in advance? Would the evident and essential topicality of comedy bear that kind of advanced timing?

At this point, it may be constructive to look at the situation in the Renaissance theatre in England. The one certain difference is that the creation of scripts was far more intensive in that commercial industry than in the system of state patronage and annual festivals at Athens, and plays were generally performed in quick succession rather than in extended runs of a particular play. The implications for rehearsal can be followed through. So Peter Thomson gave an indicative example drawn from the activity in the autumn of 1598 of the Admiral's Men at the Rose Theatre in Southwark, London, with a play called *Civil Wars: Part One* by Thomas Dekker and Michael Drayton. His conclusion was that there may not have been "much more than twenty-four hours of rehearsal" in total, probably spread over about two weeks or less; that "leading actors worked hard in personal preparation"; and that "only 'unconventional' or technically demanding scenes were tested through rehearsal".[14] In addition to the importance of the actor's written parts, which I shall discuss further in a moment, Thomson drew attention to the book-keeper's (prompter's) copy of the script and to the 'plot', a sequential summary of the episodes of the play indicating which actor-characters were required for them, which was hung on a board in the tiring house (the approximate equivalent of the scene-building in Athens).[15] Thomson's informative summary of practice has been extended recently by Tiffany Strawson in two fascinating studies, the second of which was written in collaboration with Simon Palfrey.[16] Strawson confirms the hyper-activity of the theatres in the 1590s—the Admiral's Company "played on every day except Sunday and presented fourteen different plays" in January 1596—and observes that plays might be allotted anything between a few days or two to three weeks for preparation.[17] She looks at preliminary readings—of an

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14 Thomson (1992) 59–60.
15 Thomson (1992) 121.
16 Strawson (2000); Palfrey and Strawson (2007).
17 Strawson (2000) 52–53, and 54–55.

unfinished script for the actor-sharers in the company, and of the whole script by the author(s) to the company—and at the group rehearsals that concluded the process, which might be very limited in number, but would probably include passages of collaborative song and dance.[18]

But Strawson reserves her greatest attention for the actors' 'parts', the roll that included all the lines that an actor would speak and the cues for them, of which the earliest substantial example in English is the part of Orlando in Robert Green's *Orlando Furioso* from the early 1590s, which survives in the leading Elizabethan actor Edward Alleyn's bequest to Dulwich College in London.[19] What Alleyn's part reveals is that he is given short cues, of one to three words, but no indication of how long he has to wait for them or of which character gives them, and occasional stage directions, either in Latin or in English. But Strawson and Palfrey are careful to note that the actor is not informed by the part "where or at whom he is to look, how far forward he is to walk, and so on". Taking into account the speed of preparation, their conclusion is that movements must either have been "left to the actor to determine as he cons the part" or were "stock".[20] Although this may seem pragmatic and common-sensical as a conclusion, it strikingly leaves out of account the degree to which a script, even when divided into parts, may contain in the words themselves indications of specific actions or gestures.[21]

The reliance on 'parts' as a fundamental method of preparation has a set of consequences for the process as a whole. When actors learned their words and roles independently, then group rehearsals might be very limited, and confined to specific moments: as Palfrey and Strawson observe, "particular *group* elements of the play—jigs, songs, dances, sword fights, perhaps crowd or climactic scenes—will have benefited from ensemble rehearsal."[22] In the Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre, a part might also represent the ownership of a set of roles in plays by a particular actor. Parts were also useful in the economy of the English Renaissance theatres and the dangers of piracy, in

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[18] Strawson (2000) 76–78.

[19] For details of the catalogued manuscript and its publication, see Palfrey and Strawson (2007) n. 19, 497. The part is mentioned briefly as "'archetypal'" for later British professional theatre practice by Strawson (2000) 61, and discussed in some detail by Palfrey and Strawson (2007) 20–24; see also Thomson (1992) 122, who notes that the Orlando roll is "about 17 feet long".

[20] Palfrey and Strawson (2007) 22.

[21] But see the section 'Parts and Action', 324–327, which hints at wider considerations, albeit briefly.

[22] Palfrey and Strawson (2007) 72.

performance or publication, since the existence of parts did away with the need for multiple copies. Palfrey and Strawson also comment on the scarcity of paper, the expense of making copies, and how laborious the act of copying was.[23]

The idea that 'parts' may also have been used in the ancient Greek theatre has recently received support from the publication of a papyrus fragment which has been interpreted as an ancient actor's 'part' for the character of Admetus in Euripides' *Alcestis*. The distinctive feature of the fragment is that it passes over intervening lines from the chorus or the character of Alcestis in our text of Euripides's play, and a succession of scholars has concluded that the only sensible interpretation of it is that it must be a 'part'.[24] But if that is the case, then it conspicuously lacks cues, and the date and provenance of the papyrus place it a long way from the fifth century BC in Athens, approximately in the period of the late Roman republic and early empire, and at least eventually located in Egypt. It has to be said that this evidence is slender, when compared to an authentic part kept by the actor Edward Alleyn and carrying handwriting that may well be his.[25] Yet it does not stand completely in isolation from other kinds of evidence about the process of preparation, and the more significant question is whether it is consonant with them.

One thing that stands out from comparison with preparation in English Renaissance practice is the absence of commercial pressure, and the almost madly high level of productivity that goes with it. The Athenian festivals involved a great number of dancers in dithyrambic choruses, and performing through a tragic trilogy and satyr play must have been exhausting for a chorus of 'volunteers' and satisfyingly demanding for actors. But as far as we can tell, there is an extended period available for preparation in ancient Athens. It would make little sense for the archon to appoint the dramatic *khorēgoi* almost immediately after taking office, and probably in late June or early July, unless the *khorēgoi* felt that their process of selecting and training the chorus needed as long as it could be given.[26] Although the selection of chorus members, and the necessary trainers (for dance and voice) might take time, the competition for prestige would put pressure on the *khorēgoi* to

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23 Palfrey and Strawson (2007) 1.

24 The fragment contains the script for Admetus from line 344 to line 382. After publication by Obbink (2001) in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, the discussion was led by Marshall (2004), and has been continued by Hall (2006) 42–44 and Revermann (2006a) 88–93.

25 Palfrey and Strawson (2007) 20.

26 Aristotle *Athenian Constitution* LVI.2; Csapo and Slater (1994) 143–144.

be rehearsing their choruses as soon as they could for performance early in the following year. Some at least of the choral songs and dances would have to have been composed for that process to begin. *Khorēgoi* paid, at times lavishly, for the training and apparently the diet of their chorus members, and would set aside locations for the training to take place.[27] While we can readily see in this arrangement a link, and perhaps a tense one, between *khorēgos* and playwright, there is no real sense of the actors, who would indeed be redundant for much of the work of the chorus.[28]

If the actors prepared for much of the time by themselves, they will have used either 'parts' or a full script, or will have taken the role from it being 'imparted' to them, in a process of spoken (and at times sung) repetition by a literate assistant or slave with a copy, or by the playwright himself. The case against the existence of a multiplicity of full scripts has in principle been shown to be strong; it might be that a team of actors rehearsed together, 'prompted' so to speak from one master copy. But this would only be pragmatic if actors were illiterate; it would otherwise be extremely inconvenient, impractical and slow. Actors might be supposed to be illiterate, but the weight of proof really lies the other way round: there are very sound and obvious reasons why actors in Athens would be literate, and why aspiring actors would achieve proficiency very quickly, and at a young age. We should also consider aspects of the history of acting. A competition for the leading actors in tragedy was introduced at Athens a decade or so after the introduction of the third actor in tragedy.[29] Records of this actors' competition at the City Dionysia date from the early 440s BC, while a third tragic actor is certainly required for the production of Aeschylus's *Oresteia* in 458 BC. The competition has been unwisely associated, as an institutional innovation, with the system of allocating leading actors to playwrights by lot. While this association of the two very different initiatives is still repeated by scholars, there is no good reason to advance it, as Niall Slater has patiently argued over an extended period.[30] In the light of this increased accent on

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27 The most comprehensive account, with references to sources and evidence, comes from P. Wilson (2000): on the place set aside for training, the *khoregeion*, see 71–74, on recruitment 75–80, and on training 81–86. Yet there is an important caution that should be registered, which is that most of the detailed evidence relates to dithyramb rather than to drama.

28 "I would stress the way in which, under the khoregic system, a conceptual distinction was maintained between the spheres of the actors and *khoros*, and it may be that there also remained a certain separation in practical terms between the two constituent elements of drama.": P. Wilson (2000) 84–85.

29 See Csapo and Slater (1994) 226, section IV.11.

30 N.W. Slater (2002) 27, 29, 66; see also N.W. Slater (1990b), especially 390–391.

the abilities of actors, might it be wise to see a change in the process of preparation occurring at about this time?

The argument is relatively simple. An early tragic chorus was undoubtedly trained in its songs and dances by the playwright-composer as *didaskalos*, or trainer, and there is little doubt that the playwright was himself the first 'actor', in response to the chorus.[31] In the surviving tragedies of Aeschylus, the intricate and evident involvement of most of the speaking parts with the chorus almost presupposes the continuation of an integrated process of preparation, led by the *didaskalos*, to whom the *khorēgos* in this period must surely have been subordinate in practice.[32] Those tragedies give evidence for the addition (at an unknown time, but before 472 BC and *Persians*) of a second actor and then a third, in the *Oresteia*—at latest. The competition for the tragic actors at the major festival not only follows the introduction of the third actor, and the consequent amplification of the roles of actor-characters in general, but is also associated with the withdrawal of playwrights from acting.[33] In these changed circumstances, we might look for a process of preparation in the second part of the fifth century that might separate actors from chorus in a more systematic manner.

So there is a degree of sense in presuming that preparation in Athens, from the middle of the fifth century and throughout the rest of the century, had actors working apart from the chorus, at least in the initial stages.[34] For tragedy, there may be a case for saying that there was pressure on the playwright to compose some of his songs as soon as possible. If we assume that playwrights had to make a presentation in order to be awarded a chorus, then some material may have had to be prepared (extracts from songs or speech?) at that time to accompany an outline of the treatment of the *muthoi* in the four plays.[35] The pressure for some completed choral songs and

[31] Csapo and Slater (1994) 221, in the opening paragraph to section IVAi with the references given there, have a good, concise summary of the case for this conjecture, which goes back to Aristotle.

[32] For a detailed analysis of the surviving tragedies of Aeschylus in this respect, see Ley (2007) 4–45.

[33] It might have been acceptable to be named both as the winning playwright and the winning actor; but the introduction of a separate competition for actors makes more sense if that coincidence was (extremely) unlikely, because playwrights no longer usually acted.

[34] Revermann (2006a) 92 calls this "the *modularity* of rehearsals", presenting his interpretation of it at 92–94.

[35] There is no clear evidence about the procedure for the selection of playwrights, or its timing. But there is no obvious alternative to a judgment by the archon, who could not have listened to all the plays—and whole plays—from all the candidates. Circumstances will surely have differed; on some occasions, playwrights may have been far advanced with their work,

dances to initiate the choral training would then follow that earlier need for exemplary material. In such a context, choral songs and dances that were separated from the surrounding action of the episodes would prove to be a convenience, in a tendency of which one result was the insertion of set pieces that had no relation to the plot of the play.[36]

On the other side of the process, leading actors would expect to know at an early stage which character (or combination of characters) would offer them the finest opportunities for success in the competition, and might be expected to press the playwright urgently for at least some of their 'parts'. We might assume that actors could learn their parts privately, and rehearse them independently, and many extended speeches from tragedy could be learnt and initially prepared in that manner.[37] For preparing *stichomythia*, and complex three-actor exchanges, we might assume the ensemble of actors working together: while the lines for an alternating exchange could just be learnt independently, the excitement that polished *stichomythia* could bring to tragic performance would be dependent on ensemble rehearsal.[38] It is just possible that an actor might learn and prepare a solo song by himself, with the help of a musical accompanist; but it seems perverse to assume that the composer himself would not be involved in imparting all musical components of the script, solo or choral.[39]

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on others not. The same may be true of the kind of presentation made, by the playwright alone or with others to speak parts. The situation for Aristophanic comedy, as the second section of this essay will suggest, is probably that plays were fully developed later.

[36] Aristotle, *Poetics* 1456a25–32 (section 18), ascribes this innovation to the tragic playwright Agathon, composing in the final quarter of the fifth century BC.

[37] These could well include set pieces such as many tragic 'messenger' speeches, which did call for evocative gesture and might involve the impersonation of another character, usually in extreme distress. Although ultimately they need to be integrated into the performance as a whole, since they are addressed to the presence of other characters and the chorus as well as expansively out to the audience, these speeches are a good example of what an actor might be able to prepare independently.

[38] As Wise (1998) 94 explains, "in stichomythia, meaning is created between speakers. In isolation, the utterances are incomplete: the meaning of each is absolutely dependent on its position in the two-part exchange". Like Herington before her, Wise insists on the radical impact of this form of impersonated immediacy by two actors: it was something that drama and theatre could do for listening spectators that even animated epic recitation could not. See Herington (1985) 140.

[39] Marshall (2004) 33 is very tentative about this, perhaps because he is working from the implications of later Greek papyri, while Revermann (2006a) 92–93 in his account of rehearsal 'modularity' refers to Marshall. If the composer did not impart the musical components to the performers himself, then he would have to impart them to a trusted intermediary, which seems a convoluted and difficult approach to the problem.

No production of three tragedies with the satyr-play could have been brought before an audience in the theatre without some 'group' rehearsal involving all participants. As I have discussed recently, there are many sections of tragedies after Aeschylus that require complex interaction between actors and chorus, or a combined musical and danced performance from them.[40] So the persistence of integrated rehearsing, in some form and to a considerable extent, should be a presupposition for this period; it would need to have been intensive in most cases, unless performances were regularly more disappointing than we choose to imagine.[41]

Be Prepared—Or Unprepared?
Rehearsal and the Scripts of Aristophanes

One of the features that strikes us most forcefully about many Aristophanic comedies is the sheer stamina required of the leading performer. The performer carries the play with his energy, which we know is active as well as verbal and persuasive. This is something we do associate broadly with comedy, and we know that it can result in burn-out: Molière collapsed on stage and died soon after, and British and Irish audiences at least will be sadly aware of the sudden deaths of such great comic performers as Reginald Perrin and Dermot Morgan. It is as if comedy places a responsibility for success heavily on individual shoulders, and certainly comic performers may be solo in principle—although they work with others—in a manner that tragic performers are not. Aristophanes's *Acharnians is* Dikaiopolis, his *Peace* is Trygaios, and *Birds* proves to be Peisthetairos, although it does not start off like that. In fact, this prominent feature became enshrined in Cedric Whitman's phrase 'Aristophanes and the comic hero', which almost provides a critical parallel to Bernard Knox's delineation of the 'heroic temper' in Sophocles, although both were less concerned with the demands made on performers than with an ideological vision of the heroic individual in a resistant community.[42]

If this is one striking feature of Aristophanic performance, then it is counter-balanced by a second, which is that we encounter and are enter-

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40 Ley (2007b) 91–111.

41 It is tempting to think that, since the state—the *polis* represented by the *demos*—would have wanted performances to be as impressive as possible, it would have arranged for the theatre itself to be available for final group rehearsals, presumably under strict allocation.

42 Whitman (1964) and Knox (1964). McLeish (1980) 111–126 turns this 'heroism' constructively into attention to the leading actor and his abilities.

tained by pairs of comic performers. The double acts of Euelpides and Peisthetairos, of Xanthias and Dionysus in *Frogs*, of Nikias and Demosthenes in *Knights*, of Sosias and Xanthias in *Wasps*, of Euripides and his relative in *Women at the Thesmophoria* form one kind of routine that can especially be relied upon to open a performance. Other double acts will sustain a performance, such as those between Strepsiades and his son Pheidippides, and Strepsiades and Socrates in *Clouds*, between Philokleon and his son Bdelykleon in *Wasps*, between Dikaiopolis and Lamachos. This kind of pairing is also very familiar to us, whether it is Rowan and Martin or Morecambe and Wise, or in strictly physical performance Laurel and Hardy, and we do think of nuance and timing.[43] Our examples are also stable acts, which repeat a certain form and style.

It is apparent that these resources must require specific kinds of preparation for performance, but are they to be found in the model that can be put forward for tragedy? If we take first the idea of preparation from a 'part' script, in private and individually, then the results will be patchy. The general observation, looking at all eleven comedies, is that this method would not take even a protagonist very far; with a very few minor exceptions, it is hardly applicable at all to other performers. To take *Acharnians* and provide some rough statistics, Dikaiopolis does have some extended speeches, ranging from sixty lines downwards (lines 1–42; 366–384; 480–487; 496–556); the total would be about 130 lines.[44] To put that in context, the play has about 1230 lines, of which the chorus occupies about 250 or more; Dikaiopolis is involved throughout, apart from the choral *parabasis*. So this method might help the actor prepare about a seventh of the length of his task, if not of his word-count.[45] By contrast, there is surprisingly little for either Trygaios or Peisthetairos to prepare in this way, while for the Sausage-Seller in *Knights* there is effectively only one speech, between lines 624 and 682, which is indeed a 'messenger-speech', with all the opportunities that offers the actor.

Lysistrata offers another, interesting example: the actor playing the character has a relatively long run from lines 1112 to 1156, with two short interruptions (of one line and two lines respectively). A similar case is represented in the

[43] On these Aristophanic double-acts, see in particular McLeish (1980) 131–143, who gives perhaps too much emphasis to those that sustain *Women at the Thesmophoria* and *Frogs*, at the expense of the others to which he refers at 132.

[44] These and subsequent line numbers are taken from N.G. Wilson's Oxford Classical Text of Aristophanes (2007).

[45] It should be said that the same number of lines will not necessarily represent the same extent of performance time—that is, some parts of the plays will perform more quickly than others.

opening of *Women in Assembly*, in which Praxagora has extended speeches and approximately 190 lines in all out of a total of 284 for the scene. These script-sections could be taken to show possibilities for some independent preparation. The final example of this kind is Karion in *Wealth*, who combines an opening speech of 21 lines with an extended run from 627–770, in which he is interrupted for about 26 lines only, by the chorus and the Wife, for no more than three lines on any occasion. After a break that includes two choral interludes, he has another speech of 20 lines, which is followed by a very different kind of extended scene, with Karion in dialogue and then as one of three actors. The Relative in *Women at the Thesmophoria* has a different possibility, opening and closing the scene with Agathon with two speeches of 15 lines (130–145, and 279–293 or 294), which might be prepared independently before rehearsing the full scene (of 160 lines, between three performers). Other performers may also, rarely, have opportunities of this kind; there is a clear example with Xanthias in the opening (lines 54–75), and towards the end (lines 1299–1325) of *Wasps*.

So while there is undoubtedly some scope for individual learning and preparation, and perhaps for 'parts', it is restricted. There is, however, a distinctly comic mode of performance that might offer more in this respect, since in the slightly longer spoken metres of the formal verbal contest (*agon*) that features in many of the comedies there are in some instances extended speeches. But these scenes vary markedly. In *Women in Assembly*, nothing individually for Blepyros or Praxagora, the two contestants, exceeds 7 lines from 583–727, yet during the *agon* in *Wasps* both Bdelykleon and Philokleon have extended speeches that might well be prepared independently at first, notably in the section at lines 488–724. While it is evident that these kinds of scene or sequence must eventually require paired preparation and a great deal of work, since they often form a substantial part of the play, nonetheless individual preparation for them may have been possible in some cases.[46]

It might at this point be helpful to look at preparation for the comic chorus. In one clear respect, we can be sure of detecting training and learning conducted separately from the actors, and that is in the *parabasis*, which deploys different modes of voice, presentation and performance. The *parabasis* varies its shape from play to play, and disappears from the last

[46] The *agon* may also be defined as a sequence in two, balancing sections, which has short sung and danced introductions from the chorus to the verbal exchanges, with actors concluding each section in a burst of shorter lines. The whole and its constituent elements would require the honing of specific vocal skills. On actors' vocal skills see Csapo (2002) 135–143.

two surviving plays; but if we except those two, then in the fifth century the requirements of the *parabasis* confirm similar arrangements to those proposed for the tragic chorus.[47] Plays may also have self-contained danced songs for the chorus, which involve none of the actors. In *Acharnians*, there are four of these danced songs apart from the more complex *parabasis*, the first coming with the arrival of the chorus; additionally, there is one shorter danced song, with its two parts divided by dialogue. This substantial contribution to the whole performance, which could be developed in training apart from the actors, is matched by equally substantial parts of the play in which the chorus is involved in sequences of song and dance or other forms of action with the actors. For *Acharnians*, the chorus arrives after the opening scene, and then pursues Dikaiopolis during and after his celebration of the rural Dionysia (lines 234–393). The chorus is then at rest during Dikaiopolis's visit to Euripides, but activates itself after that (from line 490 forwards). Apart from one brief comment (576–577), it is at rest during the exchange between Dikaiopolis and Lamachos (572–625). After the *parabasis*, it is again at rest during the scene with the Megarian and the informer (710–835), which it follows with a danced song (836–859). It is at rest again in the scene with the Boeotian and Nikarchos (860–928), but it joins in a song and dance with the actors at the close of that scene, and from then until the end of the play it is recurrently involved, with the notable exception of the sequence involving Dikaiopolis and Lamachos.[48]

Even if a considerable time may have been spent on training the chorus in complex and relatively self-contained sequences that would have an effective role in the performance as a whole, it is evident that a comedy could also demand a great deal of integrated rehearsal of the chorus with the actors.[49] Exploring this in full detail is beyond the scope of an outline essay; but the

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47 Dover (1972) 49–53 has a short, explanatory section on the *parabasis* in general, while Bowie (1982) looks very closely at the relation between the *parabasis* in *Acharnians* and the rest of the play.

48 Readers wishing to track my references to *Acharnians* in translation might do well to refer to the new version of the play by Michael Ewans (2012), which is accurate and direct. These thoroughly actable translations are accompanied by useful resources (list of properties, parts for doubling, glossary, and theatrical commentary) for those aiming to explore the plays in the studio or to go into production.

49 Unfortunately, most of the sources for our understanding of choral training, which are helpfully collated by Wilson, come from the fourth century BC, and relate to dithyrambs. Dramatic rehearsal is also rather different from choral 'training', although dramatic choruses will surely have been given vocal and dance training as part of their regime, with the composer probably coaching the chorus into the specific requirements of the production. In general, see P. Wilson (2000) 81–86.

kinds of involvement vary greatly, and are not just those where physical coordination in a playing space is the prime requirement, as in sequences of pursuit or combat. Sequences of that kind—such as the arrival of the chorus in *Acharnians* and *Knights*, or the combat of the semi-choruses in *Lysistrata*—need to be placed alongside danced songs which actors and chorus must rehearse together, and even extensive sections of dialogue between the chorus and an actor, such as that between the chorus and Dikaiopolis (lines 284–346) immediately after their attack on his Dionysiac procession.[50] Wherever these rehearsals took place, they must have been laborious and time-consuming, since such integrated performance cannot be the result of a last-minute rush into production.[51]

This involvement of the chorus in diverse ways with the actors also highlights the separation and self-containment of some scenes for actors. My brief analysis above of *Acharnians* conveys a sense of the chorus falling silent in some sections, and one can indeed isolate from the script a set of scenes in which two actors work together physically and verbally. *Acharnians* is helpful in this respect because it does not depend on one of the double acts that are so apparent in other comedies, since its leading character is by definition a man apart.[52] So the exchanges between Dikaiopolis and Lamachos (lines 572–625 and 1095–1142) would be rehearsed as dialogue, with perhaps some preliminary individual preparation by Dikaiopolis of his longer 'runs' in the first scene, at lines 598–606 and 607–617; these are interestingly divided by only two words from Lamachos, in what might be easily memorized as a cue.[53] In this scene, there is a single, short contribution from the chorus (576–577), but the whole first section (572–594) with its divided lines and repartee signals dual rehearsal. The second scene is of more orthodox *stichomythia*, with some few lines divided between the actors, but it is introduced by a more complex sequence, in which two different messengers give short, prepared

[50] Ewans (2012) 205–208, in the section of his theatrical commentary on 'Scene 2', provides a very good impression of the complexity of the interaction in space between actors and chorus here.

[51] What P. Wilson transliterates as *khorēgeion* (see n. 27 above) was the name for a site at least temporarily dedicated to the training of a chorus (2000) 71–74; but whether such places would have been suitable and used for rehearsals incorporating actors as well is open to question. Could the theatre itself have been allocated to composers and *khorēgoi*, on restricted and controlled access, during the winter months?

[52] While he is undoubtedly a fellow-spirit, Demigod is not in any meaningful sense a sustained double-act of that kind.

[53] It is possible to extend this backwards, by adding lines 595–597, and another 'cue' from Lamachos of three words at line 598.

speeches to which both Lamachos and Dikaiopolis react briefly. In the first scene there is some play with a property, Lamachos's helmet and plume; if the multifarious properties were in fact brought into the theatre in the performance of the second scene, it might still have been rehearsed without them in the first instance, since the dialogue discards them all very quickly.

This may also be true of the scene with Euripides, in which properties are plainly crucial to the eventual performance, but might be introduced relatively late in the rehearsal process. Dikaiopolis here has the bulk of the lines, and although some sections might just be prepared individually beforehand (465–489 have only two, one-line interjections from Euripides, and 435–444 is a short set-piece for Dikaiopolis), dual rehearsal would be essential. Here again this duality is varied by an introductory section with a different actor playing Kephisophon, as for the second scene with Lamachos, but in this case it could just be rehearsed separately. There are other, very simple scenes on this dialogue pattern, those with the Farmer and the Bridegroom, with slight differences between them: individual preparation (e.g. lines 1058–1068) would give Dikaiopolis much of the Bridegroom scene, which is not possible with the Farmer.

The scenes with the Megarian and Boeotian have interesting similarities and differences. That with the Megarian is fundamentally for dual rehearsal, with a short intervention involving a third actor in a quick physical beating (lines 818–827), and tiny contributions from the Megarian's daughters. The scene with the Boeotian has a similar structure (dialogue followed by the intervention from Nikarchos), but it also appears to have more intricate play with properties, as well as a couple of Theban pipers and a slave or more, and the physical beating just before the 'wrapping up' of Nikarchos. But that sequence is sung and danced (lines 929–951), with contributions from Dikaiopolis, the Boeotian and the chorus, and concluded with a short, further dialogue between Dikaiopolis and the Boeotian (952–958). Although similar in structure at first glance, these scenes require very different kinds of preparation, and possibly different kinds of space in which to prepare.[54]

Something similar may be true of those obviously 'large' and complicated scenes involving many characters and potentially many extras, which may have been prepared and rehearsed in stages and in different kinds of space.

[54] English (2007) has a very full discussion of the importance of properties to these scenes in *Acharnians*, but she does not consider rehearsal. Once again, Ewans (2012) 215–216 and 216–218, in his theatrical commentary on these scenes, is helpful in revealing the true contrast between them in the practicalities of performance and production.

In the opening scene of *Acharnians* there is clearly scope for individual preparation by Dikaiopolis (at least lines 1–42) and for the rehearsal of dialogue sections (e.g. the Ambassador and Dikaiopolis, 65–99). But that work has then to be integrated with script requirements for more than two speaking roles and the apparatus, however comically conjured, of the political assembly.[55] While danced and sung sequences involving actors and chorus may just have been rehearsed in a *khoregeion*, it is hard not to conclude that a more ample space, even the theatre itself, was needed for scenes such as the opening of *Acharnians* to realize their full potential.[56]

There are many questions prompted here that merit further attention, some concerning the skills of the comic actors, and others concerning the relationship between properties and the comic script.[57] But I would like to conclude with the question of whether comic playwrights/composers may have altered scenes in rehearsal, and with two possible responses to that. The first is that the emphasis in the process of comic production at Athens as a whole lay on the script, for chorus (as danced songs) and actors: neither group could get started without it. The second is that once physical routines were being rehearsed with specific properties, and actors were in control of most lines, it may have been effective and economical to adjust and revise a script rather than cling on to something that was not working quite as well in practice. What lies between these two poles of the process of preparation is the possibility that some scenes were actually developed by a playwright with comic actors, since this was the most satisfactory way of creating certain sections of script and action. This possibility returns the comic script to the probability that not all was prepared by the time of the presentation in the

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55 Olson (2002) lxiii–lxv gives a succinct review of the likely division of the roles between actors in *Acharnians*.

56 McLeish (1980) 34 has that conclusion to his review of the different stages of development of script and performance: "At some date not too far from the start of the festival, the performers must have had access to the theatre for rehearsals".

57 I have also left aside in this discussion any questions about the division of roles and responsibilities in the process of preparation and rehearsal between Aristophanes, as the playwright-composer, and the man who produced (was the *didaskalos* for) *Acharnians*, one Kallistratos. The arrangement was adopted by Aristophanes for some of his later plays as well (Kallistratos for *Birds* and *Lysistrata*, and Philonides for *Wasps* and *Frogs*): see MacDowell (1982), with references to earlier discussions. The likelihood must be that Kallistratos would be most active in ensuring that the various initial preparations took place in good order, and in conducting later group rehearsals with the playwright present, while Aristophanes will surely have imparted his own compositions to the chorus. There is also some speculation that Aristophanes may himself have acted (Dikaiopolis) in *Acharnians*: for this see N.W. Slater (1989) and (2002) 56–57.

summer to the archon, and that the script may subsequently have been made in patches. But, however we choose to look at it now, the process of rehearsal is embedded in it.

ROME AND EMPIRE

HAVEN'T I SEEN YOU BEFORE SOMEWHERE? OPTICAL ALLUSIONS IN REPUBLICAN TRAGEDY

Robert Cowan

To discuss the visual dimension of Republican tragedy, we must inevitably climb to our seat in the *cauea* and enter a world of speculation.[1] An important recent study of the genre gloomily begins "Roman republican tragedy has all but disappeared"; gloomily, but all too accurately.[2] The surviving fragments are numerous, to be sure, but often very brief and decontextualized, so that it is always challenging, and sometimes nigh-impossible, to reconstruct what was *said* (or sung) and the outline of the plot. To reconstruct what the theatrical spectacle looked like is even harder. The task is already difficult for those examining the visual elements of Greek drama or Roman comedy, but even the few aids which are available to them are denied to the student of Republican tragedy. Since, until the construction of Pompey's theatre in 55 BCE, all Roman dramas were performed on temporary stages, which were taken down after the festival, the archaeological evidence even for the layout of the stage is inevitably exiguous.[3] The remarkable range of theatrical images preserved on vases from Magna Graecia is not only difficult to interpret, but generally predates the heyday of Republican drama and represents exclusively Greek tragedy and comedy.[4] As a first note of optimism, however, these artefacts do provide important evidence that tragic scenes could be recognized (with or without the aid of name-labels) on the basis of their visual dimension by communities in Italy, whether or not they had first-hand experience of actual performances.

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[1] For brevity and convenience, fragments are cited from what remains the standard edition of all the fragments of Roman tragedy, Ribbeck (1897), and the most easily-available and, for Anglophone readers at least, most user-friendly, Warmington (1936). The standard editions of the individual dramatists, Jocelyn (1967), Dangel (1995) and Schierl (2006), all include concordances between their and Ribbeck's numerations.

[2] Gildenhard (2010) 153.

[3] A good survey of the evidence and a persuasive hypothesis may be found in Goldberg (1998).

[4] Among the considerable and growing body of scholarship, see esp. Taplin (1992) and (2007), and most recently Revermann (2010) and Csapo (2010) 38–82. Csapo (140–167) also dismisses Roman mosaics of Menandrian scenes as evidence for the performance of Greek New Comedy at Rome.

Yet it is the loss of the playscripts themselves which is the most damaging. Much of our understanding (or at least our beliefs) about the theatrical aspects of Greek drama and Roman comedy, though supplemented by archaeological evidence and testimonia in non-dramatic texts, is derived from what can be deduced from the surviving scripts. We know that Agamemnon walks into his palace on the purple tapestry which Clytemnestra has rolled out because he tells us that he is about to do so. We know that the personified Demos has been rejuvenated in the Propylaea and emerges on the *ekkyklēma* in splendid attire because the Sausage-seller describes this as it happens. We know that Theopropides knocks loudly at the door of his locked house, because he announces his intention to do so and accompanies it with appropriate shouts.[5] Most scholars would agree, while making the same allowance as him for the unknowability of the details, with Taplin's "fair rule of thumb that the significant stage action is implicit in the text."[6] The surviving fragments of Republican tragedy do throw up the occasional cue to such effect. In Ennius' *Hectoris Lytra*, Patroclus makes it clear that Eurypylus is beginning to faint from his injuries, and Eurypylus in turn indicates that, as at the end of *Iliad* 11, Patroclus binds his wound.[7] Pacuvius' Parthenopaeus leaves neither the ancient audience nor the modern reader in any doubt that he is showing a recognition token (be it a ring or an bracelet) to his mother, the eponymous Atalanta: *suspensum in laeuo brachio ostendo ungulum* ("I am showing [you] the ring hung on my left arm").[8] Likewise, when the unidentified speaker of Accius, *Amphitruo* fr. 86 R^3=50 W asks *set quaenam haec mulier est funesta ueste, tonsu lugubri?* ("But who on earth is this woman in funereal dress, with hair loosed in mourning?"), we may share his or her puzzlement regarding her identity (though Alcumena must be the most likely candidate), but we are quite sure about both the fact of her entrance and the nature and

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[5] ἐπεὶ δ' ἀκούειν σοῦ κατέστραμμαι τάδε, / εἶμ' ἐς δόμων μέλαθρα πορφύρας πατῶν (A. *Ag*. 956–957); ὅδ' ἐκεῖνος ὁρᾶν τεττιγοφόρας, ἀρχαίῳ σχήματι λαμπρός, / οὐ χοιρινῶν ὄζων ἀλλὰ σπονδῶν, σμύρνῃ κατάλειπτος (Ar. *Eq*. 1331–1332); *sed quid hoc? occlusa ianua est interdius. / pultabo. heus, ecquis intust? aperitin fores?* (Pl. *Mos*. 444–445).

[6] Taplin (1978) 17. See also the Introduction to this volume, p. 4.

[7] Patr. *laberis; quiesce* Eur. *et uolnus alliga*. fr. 180 W, following Bentley's reconstruction from Cic. *Tusc*. 2.38. Ribbeck reduces it to his notes on Enn. *inc. fab*. 314–325. Cf. Hom. *Il*. 11.827–847 and see further Koster (2000).

[8] Pac. *Atalanta* fr. 64 R^3=59 W. As Schierl (2006) 178 ad loc. notes, "Mit *ostendo* kommentiert der Sprecher seine Handlung"; she further compares Epidicus' *em, ostendo manus*. (Pl. *Epid*. 683). Müller's emendation *ostende*, though considered "erwägenswert" by Schierl and approvingly mentioned by Warmington, seems unnecessary. If correct, it would still serve as a visual cue, as Atalanta instructs Parthenopaeus to perform the same action.

significance of her costume. Yet such cues are rare, and moreover isolated. Even where they have been preserved, we crucially lack the continuous dialogue which has enabled Marshall, by employing concepts like focus, to reconstruct with a high degree of probability the blocking and action of whole scenes of Plautine comedy.[9]

Nevertheless the situation is not utterly desperate.[10] As we have just seen, some embedded cues are preserved among the book-fragments of Republican tragedy,[11] and from these some "significant actions" can be reconstructed, even if it is only that of the single movement which is described, announced or commanded in that particular fragment.[12] With a smaller degree of certitude, but still a high one of probability, the version of a myth which (as can be deduced, though with the risk of circularity) the dramatist followed will tend to suggest that a certain tragedy included certain scenes featuring certain actions. Such surmises can be supported by surviving fragments which, while not serving as visual cues in themselves, nevertheless must have been uttered during a scene in which a particular action took place. Even greater confidence can be felt about the existence of certain scenes and their constituent visual aspects when the plot of a tragedy can (probably)

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9 See Marshall (2006) esp. 159–174.

10 Discussions (often very brief) of scenic effects in Republican tragedy can be found in Beare (1950) 124–125; Beacham (1991) 124–125 (Accius); Manuwald (2003) 113–120 (Pacuvius); Erasmo (2004) 9–80; Boyle (2006) 94–95 (Pacuvius); 119–121 (Accius).

11 Unfortunately all the *reliquiae* of Republican tragedy are currently book-fragments, but the discovery of a large part of Caecilius Statius' *Faenerator* on a papyrus from Herculaneum (P.Herc. 78) holds out some hope for the future. See Kleve (1996) and (2001).

12 In addition to the three fragments already discussed, we might include: Liv. Andr. *Aegisthus* 13–14 R^3=12–13 W; Naev. *Iphigenia* 18 R^3=20 W; *Lycurgus* 26–31 R^3=27–32 W; Enn. *Achilles* 1 W=*Achilles Aristarchi* 13 R^3; *Hectoris Lytra* 143–144 R^3=162–163 W, 199 W=*inc. nom. rel.* 335 R^3; *Hecuba* 172 R^3=213 W; *Iphigenia* 181–182 R^3=220–221 W; *Medea exul* 235–236 R^3=289–290 W; *Telephus* 287 R^3=339 W; *Thyestes* 296 R^3=354 W; 298 R^3=355 W; 306 R^3=361 W; Pac. *Antiopa* 16 R^3=15 W; 350–352 R^3=18–20 W; *Chryses* 98 R^3=89 W; *Dulorestes* 133 R^3=154 W; *Iliona* 197–201 R^3=205–210 W; 214 R^3=222 W; *Medus* 228 R^3=241 W; 238 R^3=251 W; *Niptra* 244–246 R^3=266–268 W, 256–267 R^3=280–291 W; *Periboea* 312–315 W=311–312 + 291–292 R^3, 317 W; *Teucer* 313–314 R^3=337–338 W, 326 R^3=344 W; *inc. fab.* 360–361 R^3=15–16 W; 400 R^3=17 W; Acc. *Antenoridae* 123 R^3=82 W; *Antigona* 138–139 R^3=90 W; 140–141 R^3=91–92 W; *Astyanax* 187–188 R^3=151–152 W; *Atreus* 233 R^3=198 W; *Clytemnestra* 29 R^3=244 W; *Diomedes* 277 R^3=260 W; *Epigoni* 289–291 R^3=277–279 W, 302 R^3=287 W, 304 R^3=289 W; *Eurysaces* 374–375 R^3=335–336 W, 382–383 R^3=368–369 W; *Melanippus* 439 R^3=417 W; *Neoptolemus* 470 R^3/W; *Oenomaus* 498–499 R^3=495–496 W; *Philocteta* 568 R^3=570 W; *Phoenissae* 592 R^3=595 W. Accius's. *Philocteta* 525–536 R^3=527–540 W does not indicate any action but is a detailed ecphrasis setting the scene around Philoctetes' cave on Lemnos. I omit fragments which seem to belong to messenger speeches, prophecies and other narratives of action in the past or future, though it is possible that some may be describing action elsewhere onstage.

be reconstructed, not merely from the general outline of a myth, but from a specific "model" from Attic tragedy (as with the Euripidean antecedents of Ennius' *Hecuba*, Pacuvius' *Antiopa*, and Accius' *Bacchae*, among many others), or sometimes a non-tragic, often epic source (Ennius' *Hectoris Lytra*, Accius' *Epinausimache* and *Nyctegresia* from the *Iliad*, the latter's *Medea siue Argonautae* probably from Apollonius' *Argonautica*), or from the plot-summaries, perhaps deriving from ancient *hypotheses*, preserved in the *Fabulae* of Hyginus.[13] Of course, the element of speculation and the need for caution remain great, and even the surviving lines (let alone the lost spectacle) frequently show how the Republican tragedians have diverged from their models or how Hyginus' mythographical synopsis differs from what must have been the action of the tragedy.[14] Nevertheless, some inferences about stage action can be drawn, especially when the shards of evidence, so far from conflicting, positively corroborate each other. Finally, there are the explicit testimonia for the visual aspects of the performance of Republican tragedy. These come entirely from the last decades of the Republic, almost two hundred years since the first performance of Livius Andronicus' Latin version of a Greek tragedy, and between twenty and forty years after the death of Accius. The testimonia, mostly from Cicero, are primarily evidence for late Republican *re*performance and are thus at best problematic as evidence for the theatrical practice of tragic premieres in the second century. However, they remain valuable evidence for that late Republican practice, and in a number of cases preserve details of staging which were probably shared by earlier and even original productions.

The subject of this chapter is not, however, the stagecraft of Republican tragedy in general but what is, if anything, an even more elusive issue: that of visual intertextuality. The ways in which one dramatic performance can evoke recollections of another, not by means of verbal reminiscence, but through similarities in their visual dimension, is a generally neglected area, not least because it is so hard to establish, let alone to interpret. Yet it remains an intriguing aspect of theatrical semiotics in general and, I

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13 On this last, see esp. Schierl (2006) 22–25, with further bibliography.

14 A representative example of each: Enn. *Medea exul* fr. 242–243 R^3=294–295 W, unless they are from a separate play closer to Sophocles' *Aegeus* (so Jocelyn [1967] 342–350, with extensive discussion), seem to extend the action of Euripides' *Medea* to the eponymous character's arrival in Athens. Pacuv. *Medus* fr. 252–263 W=*trag. inc.* 186–192 R^3, *Medus* 239–242 R^3 are clearly from a touching recognition scene between Medea and the blind, deposed Aeëtes, but Hyg. *Fab.* 27 makes no mention of such a scene or even of Aeëtes' appearance in the play.

would argue, one of peculiar significance to Republican tragedy. For while the study of the tragic drama of Livius, Naevius, Ennius, Pacuvius and Accius has extended beyond the mere reconstruction of plots and search for Greek models to embrace issues of ethnic identity and political ideology, nevertheless the most remarkable aspect of these plays remains not only the way in which, as I have put it elsewhere, "a central cultural practice of an alien culture was adopted, adapted, appropriated and transformed to serve as a central cultural practice of Rome",[15] but how that cultural practice self-consciously constructed its own act of adoption, adaptation, appropriation and transformation. The source-proclaiming prologues of Plautus and Terence make it clear that this is an act of *imitatio*, not of *furtum*. These comedies want their audience to know that their antecedents are plays by Menander, Diphilus, and Philemon, partly to acquire some of the prestige attached to these famous names, but also because they want them to reflect on what it means that *Plautus uortit barbare*, that they stand in a complex relationship with their Greek "models" of secondary, belated dependency alongside assertive, reinterpretative rewriting, a relationship not dissimilar from that of Roman to Greek culture as a whole.[16] Tragedy, even two centuries later, when Seneca's self-conscious muse was at her most metatheatrical, never reflects quite so explicitly as comedy on its own status as a literary artefact. Yet *implicitly* Ennius' *Eumenides* must demand that at least part of its audience think of its relationship with Aeschylus' play of the same name, Pacuvius' *Niptra* with Sophocles', Accius' *Phoenissae* with Euripides'. That this is more than assumption is strongly suggested by the evidence of Plautus who twice refers to Ennian tragedies as if they were in fact their Greek models. The opening lines of the *Poenulus* famously proclaim his intention to imitate the *Achilles* of Aristarchus (*TrGF* 14 F 1a), but the dizzying mixture of quotation, pastiche and parody which follows makes it clear that this play is in fact a tragedy by Ennius, but one which either in its own promotion or at least in the public consciousness was as clearly an imitation of Aristarchus' play as Plautus' own *Mercator* was of Philemon's *Emporos*.[17] Likewise, it is generally accepted that Sceparnio's reference in the opening scene of the *Rudens* to a storm which was not just a wind but "the *Alcumena* of Euripides" refers not

15 Cowan (2010) 39.

16 On Republican tragedy and its cultural ramifications, see Gruen (1990) 79–123; Habinek (1998) 34–68; Feeney (2005); Boyle (2006) 3–55. Almost all the articles in Manuwald (2000a) deal with identity and alterity in the genre. For comedy, see esp. Leigh (2004).

17 *Achillem Aristarchi mihi commentari lubet: / inde mi principium capiam ex ea tragoedia*. Pl. *Poen*. 1–2.

to the Attic original but to a version (totally lost) by Ennius.[18] Of course, as we shall note in more detail below, the modes of tragic and comic allusion differ greatly,[19] but it is largely the same audience which would watch both, and there is no good reason to think that they would think of the same play as "the *Alcumena* of Euripides" when watching a comedy but not when watching a tragedy.

Yet it is not merely with Greek originals that Republican tragedies demand to be compared. As Rome developed its own tragic tradition, new generations of dramatists would recall what were now the classics (perhaps reperformed) of *Roman* tragedy. It is hard to believe that Accius' *Andromeda, Athamas* and *Hecuba* would not be compared, and be designed to be compared, with the plays of the same name and same theme by Ennius, nor his *Armorum Iudicium* with Pacuvius', perhaps even his *Stasiastae* with Naevius' *Lycurgus*. Even more interesting are the plays which seem to set themselves up as "sequels", evoking but not reproducing a distinguished tragic forebear, as in the cases of Pacuvius' *Chryses* (what Orestes did next), *Medus* (son of Medea) and *Iliona* (whatever happened to baby Polydorus). Perhaps most intriguing of all are *fabulae praetextae*.[20] These dramas on Roman historical themes were certainly modelled on tragedies in form and diction, and it is hard to believe that (again, at least part of) the audience would not draw suggestive comparisons between them and the formally similar *fabulae crepidatae* on mythological themes.

Finally, plays allude not only to each other but to the extra-theatrical world. Whether or not Republican tragedy allegorized recent or even contemporary events—whether for instance the figures of the Gracchi lie behind those of Accius' tyrants[21]—we have the explicit testimony of Cicero about several occasions (to which we shall return) when the reperformance of Republican tragedies made reference to contemporary events in such a way that the audience were supposed to make connections between what they could see onstage and *both* the extratheatrical world *and* the intrinsic "meaning" of the tragedy, as constructed by knowledge of the myth and of earlier performances

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18 *non uentus fuit, uerum Alcumena Euripidi*, Pl. *Rud.* 86. See Skutsch (1967) 129–130.

19 Sharrock (2009) 281 on this very line: "There is one particular kind of tragic moment which belongs quintessentially to comedy—that is parodic direct reference."

20 Useful discussions of *praetextae* include Flower (1995) and Manuwald (2001). Wiseman (1998) 1–74 and much of his other work builds on the intriguing but controversial hypothesis that much of Roman myth and history derives from their dramatization in *praetextae*.

21 A view put forward by Bilinski (1958) and still regularly accepted, e.g. by Boyle (2006) 124.

of the same play. There is therefore ample indication that the audiences of Republican tragedy were expected—with varying degrees of competence and sophistication corresponding to their education, their experience of earlier performances and even their general perceptiveness—to recognize and interpret a complex of allusions embedded in the performance in front of them. That these allusions should not only be verbal but also visual seems highly probable in a genre where *opsis* and spectacle played so large a part, and indeed I hope to show that the evidence for visual allusion is all but incontrovertible in some cases. However, I shall first survey some of the theoretical and practical issues surrounding the very notion of optical and specifically theatrical allusion in general and particularly with regard to ancient drama, before considering its implications for Republican tragedy.

Déjà-vu All Over Again: Visual Allusion and Ancient Drama

Intertextuality and allusion remain among the most widely studied but also the most controversial aspects of classical literature.[22] Whether the intertextuality be taken as a multidirectional property of autonomous texts whose signifiers float free, or allusion as an intentional, directional, authorial act, the questions as to what constitutes an allusion or intertext, how it is to be recognized and by whom, and how it might be interpreted once it has been recognized are among the most fraught as well as the most stimulating in current criticism. However, when dealing with written texts, and especially with the self-consciously learned culture of Alexandrian poetry and its Roman successors, where the obscurity of the reference is part of the point, those who wish to propose arcane allusions have at least a historicist defence against the objections of those who might brand them "hyperintertextualists".[23] The situation with visual and above all theatrical allusions is even more difficult. Controversial though the identification of verbal allusions are, most critics would accept that shared lexical, formal and metrical features constitute at least the basis on which one can go on to argue whether something is an allusion or not. Even the criteria by which

[22] In addition to the immense body of scholarship on intertextuality in specific texts, we might single out as influential surveys of the field and its theoretical implications Conte (1986), Fowler (1997) and Hinds (1998).

[23] The word is coined by D. West (1990) 71, quoted by Lyne (1994) 196–197, with a defence of intertextuality. For an equally characteristic but more extensive sceptical view of intertextuality, see D. West (1998) 46–49.

one image, tableau or action might visually suggest another are far harder to establish. Next there is the transitory nature of theatrical performance, which means that the viewer cannot dwell on, let alone revisit a moment of spectacle in the same way that even an ancient reader could scroll back through his book-roll. Finally, there remains the question as to how visual allusions, once they have been established as such, might be interpreted by an audience or indeed by different members of that audience. Before focusing on the specific issues raised by ancient drama and especially Republican tragedy, it will be worth considering these issues a little more.

The very notion of visual allusion raises intriguing cognitive issues, which are not dissimilar to those involved in verbal allusions.[24] Any image, be it a flat picture, a three-dimensional statue, or a theatrical scene, serves as an "allusion" either to something in the world or an imaginary entity, or to another image. As such, scholars of painting and the plastic arts have grappled with notions of what constitutes an allusion in visual terms and how it might be interpreted.[25] Stephanie Ross, for example, draws intriguing parallels between the way that Manet's *Dejeuner sur l'herbe* alludes to Raphael, or Liechtenstein's *Cathedral* series alludes to Monet's paintings of the Rouen Cathedral, and the operation of allusions in literary texts, extending this further to allusion in music and across modes. Yet such allusions in and to static images, though they share with theatrical allusion the problem of what aspects of visual configuration might be considered sufficiently similar for one instantiation to allude to another, lack the dynamic, transient and ephemeral quality of drama. A painting can be looked at for a long period and on unlimited occasions, allowing at least as much opportunity for registering, recognizing and interpreting an allusion as when reading a Callimachean hymn or a Vergilian eclogue—perhaps more, since the act of reading, however slow and however oft-repeated, is still a sequential process contingent on the passage of linear time, whereas the viewing of a painting is a non-linear process.

An intriguing middle-ground is held by allusions in film and television. These share with theatre the transience of the moving image, but that transience can be overcome by the possibility of reviewing and, in the successive ages of video, DVDs and digital movie-files, the time-manipulating

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[24] See Wade (1990) for some interesting reflections on the subject, though his emphasis is more on the "allusive" relationship of pictorial images to reality than on that between two different mimetic images.

[25] See for example Hermeren (1975); Ross (1981); Irwin (2001).

power of the pause and rewind buttons. Cinematic allusions, certainly from earlier eras, might be expected not to assume more than a single, uninterrupted viewing by an audience, but creative artists have always embraced the possibilities offered by developing technology and this affects the nature of allusion as much as other aspects. To take *The Simpsons* as an example, its dense, esoteric and often fleeting allusions are often designed so that they can *only* be detected, let alone recognized, by use of modern playback technology such as pause and slow-motion.[26] How different from the stage-life of our own dear Ennius! Yet the principles of visual allusion in film and television, many of which can be recognized on first viewing, even if the scene alluded to has become memorable through repetition and reproduction, are not dissimilar from what might be predicated for the theatre: the allusion in De Palma's *The Untouchables* to the pram rolling down the Odessa Steps in Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* is unmistakable and, as Biguenet has shown, has a motivic significance as it realigns the audience's sympathies with the forces of the state (as represented by Elliot Ness and his G-men) against its enemies (Al Capone and his mob), in precise inversion of Eisenstein's use of the same image to demonize the pre-Revolutionary Russian state.[27] Issues both of recognizability and interpretation can thus be extrapolated, while always making allowances for the difference of medium and genre, from modern cinematic allusion to ancient drama.

Visual allusion in modern drama has not, as far as I have been able to ascertain, been much studied. Issacharoff's chapter on "Theatrical intertextuality" in his *Discourse as Performance* has some interesting points to make, but his emphasis is very much on the verbal and specifically the parodic, including intertextuality in titles and (as a close approach to visual allusion) stage directions. He does note that "theatrical intertextuality is … not only a question of *texts*; there may also be an allusion to the visual" (his italics), but even here his interest is more in stage directions, "the didascalic channel [which] serves as a mediating text".[28] The more truly visual allusions which he does discuss—that of the human phonographs in Cocteau's *Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel* to a Greek tragic chorus or of the placards in Ionesco's *L'Impromptu*

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[26] "Exploiting relatively recent entertainment technologies, such as the pause/frame-advance buttons on VCRs and DVD players, [episode 138] features numerous images full of easy-to-miss details, such as a glimpse of Groening's office, … fast spoof credits, and the trademark public display notice" (quotation from S. Knox (2007) 74). On intertextuality in *The Simpsons*, see also Irwin & Lombardo (2001) and Gray (2006).

[27] Biguenet (1998) 138.

[28] Issacharoff (1989) 48–49.

de l'Alma to those of Brecht's epic theatre—tend to be allusions to aspects of the broader theatrical tradition than to a specific play or performance.[29] As such they might parallel generically paratragic allusions in comedy, but nothing which could be conceived of in tragedy. However, they do indicate some of the modes in which theatrical allusion in its visual dimension can operate.

It is high time that we moved onto the specific question of ancient drama, and the additional factors which must be taken into account when looking for visual allusions. Above all there is the question of the recognizability of allusions, depending as it does on familiarity with and memory of the source scene, as well on as the grounds on which the connection between it and the target scene might be made. Only then can issues of interpretation be addressed. Considering the limited evidence for all aspects of Republican tragedy which we have already noted, we shall start by examining the possibilities for allusion in the better-preserved texts of fifth-century Attic drama.

Comedy offers valuable but problematic evidence for the potential of tragedy to allude to tragedy. Paratragedy and other allusions, both to tragedy and to other comedies (not to mention "allusions", in the broader sense, to the "reality" of the *polis* and wider world outside, or at least a version of it), abound in Old and New Comedy. Yet comedy is metatheatrical, playful, willing to break the dramatic illusion and stamp up and down on it.[30] As such, and because it is so self-conscious about its own status as a dramatic performance, it also tends to be more prepared than tragedy to refer explicitly to other plays *as* plays. Telephus in Aristophanes is not the mythical beggar-king of Mysia who happened to be represented onstage in a tragedy which happened to be by Euripides; rather he is a quintessentially Euripidean tragic character whose function within Aristophanic comedy derives almost entirely from the fact that he *is* a quintessentially Euripidean tragic character. Plautus' Sceparnio, in a passage to which we have already referred, does not use subtle verbal echoes to evoke the storm in Euripides' (or Ennius') *Alcumena* and thereby to produce in the audience a complex of associations with a storm which happened to have been depicted in a tragedy; rather it is the storm in Euripides' *Alcumena as* the storm in Euripides' *Alcumena* which is explicitly evoked, a theatrical storm which not only occurred in a tragedy

29 Issacharoff (1989) 49–50.

30 From the extensive bibliography on comedy's metatheatricality see esp. Muecke (1977), N.W. Slater (1985), (2002) and Dobrov (2001).

but symbolizes all the overblown, hyperbolic bombast with which comedy routinely characterizes tragedy.[31] This agonistic tendency is widespread in comedy, Old and New, where the superiority of the "lower" genre is often asserted by parodic allusion to the "higher".

Yet the problem with extrapolating from comic allusive practice to tragic rests not so much with the former's adversarial tendency *per se* but rather in the self-conscious nature of the allusions and the closely related issue of how they are signalled. Because, as we have seen, comedy generally demands that the audience recognize tragic motifs, characters and scenes *as* tragic, it tends to make quite sure that they cannot be mistaken for phrases, mythological characters, or actions independent of a specific tragic instantiation. As a result, most comic allusions are either so explicit or otherwise so clear that they can be confidently identified as such. Tragedy, even at its most self-conscious and metatheatrical, can never be explicit about such matters, and rarely can it signal them unambiguously by other means. Moreover, tragic allusion tends to be to the action, content and characters of other tragedies, rather than to the tragedies as tragedies. To put it in Aristotelian terms, one might say that tragedy alludes to the *praxis* rather than to the *mimesis* of the *praxis*. With these caveats in mind, however, the important evidence of comedy for optical allusion can be tentatively put forward.

Even with comedy, it is problematic to determine what an audience can be expected both to recognize and remember. To begin at one extreme, Revermann expresses caution as to what might stick in an audience's memory and produce an appropriate response even in the course of *one performance*:

> An intertextual reference ... will less easily get lost on the spectator if the reference is to a moment of the ephemeral performance which stuck out for its visual and/or verbal humour and got as many of the audience as possible physically involved through laughter—if the reference is, in other words, not pitched as 'intertextual' but 'intratheatrical'.[32]

Certainly the criterion of peculiarity is key to both memory and recognition. An image (or indeed a phrase) must "stick out" if it is to "stick" in the memory and be susceptible to recall, but it is also its unusual features which lead an audience to think that an image with similar unusual features is meant to recall it rather than to belong in a sequence of independent, nondescript images. Yet the issue of memory—and even of being old enough and having

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[31] Of the equally large bibliography on comedy's construction of tragedy see esp. the subtle and stimulating discussion at Silk (2000) 42–97.

[32] Revermann (2006a) 38.

attended the right plays for memory to be a possibility—arises when we deal with allusions between different performances, perhaps separated by a number of years. The scene in *Frogs* where Charon teaches Dionysus to row has been thought to allude visually to one in Eupolis' *Taxiarchs*, where Phormio likewise instructs the god. Yet, as Slater notes, in a case such as this where several years—perhaps as many as twenty—have passed since the staging of the "source" play, "any visual allusion is alive only for an older generation in the audience."[33]

This seems a cogent point, and yet there are Aristophanic scenes in which the comic effect unquestionably relies on (or at least is massively enhanced by) the recognition of a visual allusion to a tragedy which may have been staged several years earlier. Dicaeopolis' borrowing of Telephus' rags from Euripides to increase the pathos of his entreaty to the eponymous Acharnians is an obvious case, but it is one which is heavily and explicitly signalled by verbal references to Euripides' play *Telephus*.[34] The visual allusion is not to Telephus the man but to Telephus the character in a tragedy as performed by an actor wearing a specific costume. Indeed, the borrowing of a visually significant costume from one play for use in another is in itself a kind of self-conscious trope for the modality of visual allusion. The explicit signalling of the allusion, the way in which the tragedy which is being alluded to is visually (through the physical prop of the costume) embedded in the comedy and *then* alluded to, serves a double function. It ensures that every member of the audience, even those who have never even *heard* of Euripides' *Telephus*, let alone seen it, will get the allusion and, by a sort of "Emperor's New Clothes" effect, enter into collusion with everyone else in appreciating the reminiscence of what they are clearly meant to be recalling. Moreover the signposting indicates that it is that particularly comic type of allusion to a play *qua* play, to the *mimesis* of the *praxis* rather than to the *praxis* itself. Both these functions are alien to tragedy. Yet the allusion to the *Telephus* in *Acharnians*, by showing how an optical allusion can be explicitly signalled by verbal means, encourages us to consider how such allusions can be signalled less explicitly, but still using ancillary means in addition to the purely visual.

Further along this spectrum, though still securely within the self-conscious range of comic allusion, are some of the instances of visual allusion in Aristophanes' *Peace* and *Thesmophoriazusae*. In the latter play, the allusions

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33 N.W. Slater (2002) 187.

34 Ar. *Ach.* 404–489, esp. 414–434. On tragic allusions in this scene and the subsequent scene with the Acharnians, see esp. Rau (1967) 19–42; N.W. Slater (2002) 51–58.

to, or rather re-enactments of, the various "escape tragedies" by which Euripides tries to rescue his kinsman (named Mnesilochus by the scholia but never in the play) feature a number of visual references, but these are explicitly signalled in the dialogue, just as in *Acharnians*. Thus the gloriously inventive transformation of the plank to which Mnesilochus has been bound by the Scythian Archer into Andromeda's rock is signalled to the audience as the former declares that he has seen Euripides in the guise of Perseus signalling that he, Mnesilochus, must "become" Andromeda.[35] The allusion is not quite as explicitly to Perseus and Andromeda as tragic characters as in *Acharnians*, but by this stage of a play which began with Agathon's discourse on *mimesis* and has continued with Mnesilochus and Euripides enacting various Euripidean roles, its metatheatrical import must be reasonably clear. Far less explicit is the scene where Mnesilochus, his cover blown, snatches one of the women's wineskins and threatens to "kill" it in clear but unstated parody of the Euripidean Telephus holding baby Orestes hostage (*Thesm.* 689–657). Here there is no explicit mention of Euripides' play, or even of the mythological figures which constitute its dramatis personae. Yet the tableau itself—recently disguised male figure holding "baby" and threatening to "kill" it while "baby's" "mother" looks on distraught—with only the assistance of wordplay on the conceit of wineskin-as-baby and of course the pervasive presence of Euripidean tragedy throughout the play, is enough to establish the visual connection with the tableau in Euripides' play and to produce that visual allusion's parodic, agonistic, bathetic effect.[36]

Perhaps most intriguing of all is the entrance via the *mēkhanē* of Trygaeus on a flying dung-beetle in *Peace* in (parodic) visual allusion to the similar entrance of Euripides' eponymous Bellerophon on Pegasus.[37] Again certain verbal signals are provided for the audience. The second slave sows in the audience the expectation of an allusion by positing a "young smart-ass"

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[35] ἀνὴρ ἔοικεν οὐ προδώσειν, ἀλλά μοι / σημεῖον ὑπεδήλωσε Περσεὺς ἐκδραμών, / ὅτι δεῖ με γίγνεσθ' Ἀνδρομέδαν: πάντως δέ μοι / τὰ δέσμ' ὑπάρχει. ("I don't think he will betray me, but he made a secret signal to me when he was running out at Perseus that I have to become Andromeda: well, I certainly have the chains!"): *Thesm.* 1010–1013.

[36] Both Sommerstein and Austin-Olson suggest that *Thesm.* 694–695a (πληγὲν μαχαίρᾳ τῇδε φοινίας φλέβας / καθαιματώσει βωμόν) may be a quotation from the *Telephus*, but it could equally be paratragic pastiche, and in any case an unattributed trimeter and a half are hardly more recognizable than a tableau. It is also worth noting that Bowie (1993a) 223–224 suggests that the whole of the first half of *Thesmophoriazusae* alludes to *Telephus*, as the hero disguises himself, infiltrates an enemy gathering, and makes a defence speech. See also Rau (1967) 42–50.

[37] On the parody, see Rau (1967) 89–97 and the commentaries of Sommerstein and Olson.

(νεανίας δοκησίσοφος, 44) among them who tries to guess what the beetle means ("τὸ δὲ πρᾶγμα τί; ὁ κάνθαρος δὲ πρὸς τί;" 44–45) while the first slave imagines an Ionian sitting next to him who mistakenly interprets it as an allusion to Cleon ("δοκέω μέν, ἐς Κλέωνα τοῦτ' αἰνίσσεται" 47). By these means, the audience are primed to look out for an allusion. The second slave mentions that Trygaeus refers to the dung-beetle as his "Pegasus" parodying a line from the tragedy itself, although the recognizability of such lines by much of the audience is at least as problematic as that of the visual spectacle.[38] In general, the notion of flying to heaven to challenge Zeus (albeit on very different grounds) would also generally suggest the *myth* of Bellerophon, which would facilitate recognition of allusions to a *tragedy* about him. However, the central visual allusion remains the most striking aspect of Aristophanes' parody of *Bellerophon*. The use of the *mēkhanē* to enable a hero to fly to heaven fulfils Revermann's criteria of a spectacle which "sticks out". It is debatable and ultimately for our purposes irrelevant whether the spectacle of Trygaeus flying on a crane-carried dung-beetle would on its own have been sufficient to evoke the equivalent spectacle in Euripides' *Bellerophon*. The key point is that, as with the Telephus parody in *Thesmophoriazusae*, contextualization and cues well short of the explicit statement in *Acharnians* can combine with a strikingly memorable image to establish a clear and virtually unmistakable visual allusion.

There is thus ample evidence in comedy for the use of visual allusion to tragic tableaux and other visual aspects. It may be argued that the modalities and targets of visual allusion in comedy are so different from those one might expect in tragedy, that it becomes doubtful whether tragedy would employ visual allusion at all. Yet the case can at least be made that, if comic dramatists could expect their audiences to recognize a visual allusion, with a greater or lesser degree of verbal assistance, then it would be possible for tragedy to do the same, albeit using different forms of assistance and to very different ends. There does remain the question of how, except in extreme cases where the allusion is all-but spelt out as in *Acharnians*, anyone who was either too young or simply had happened not to attend the Dionysia at which the tragedy alluded to was performed would recognize a visual allusion. It is beyond the scope of this chapter, and perhaps beyond the scope of the current state of evidence, to say much on the situation for fifth-century Attic drama, but,

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[38] "ὦ Πηγάσειον," φησί, "γενναῖον πτερόν …" (Ar. *Pax* 76) ~ ἄγ' ὦ φίλον μοι Πηγάσου ταχὺ πτερόν … (Eur. *Bellerophon* fr. 306 Kannicht). On the "competence" of Classical Athenian theatre audiences see Revermann (2006b).

even if restagings at the major festivals were not yet performed, it would seem plausible that a combination of deme performances, written texts of playscripts and word-of-mouth about a particularly memorable spectacle would combine to enable a substantial section of an audience to recognize spectacles which resembled them. There is also the question of precisely what the "different forms of verbal assistance" are which tragedy might use to signal an allusion. In order to answer this, we must turn to actual (or at least possible) examples of tragic allusion.

To get a sense of how tragic allusion, lacking many of the self-conscious signals available to comedy, might operate, it is obviously useful to consider the phenomenon in fifth-century Attic tragedy, the only branch of the genre earlier than our Republican examples for which we have a number of extant playscripts as well as other evidence such as testimonia and vase-paintings. As a starting point, and with an eye to Revermann's cautionary words about the limits of "intertheatricality" even between different parts of a single performance, we might consider Taplin's notion of "mirror scenes". As defined by him in *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus*, a mirror scene is "[t]he repetition or reflection of an incident or scene in such a striking way as to recall the earlier event."[39] A year later, he devoted a whole chapter of *Greek Tragedy in Action* to the phenomenon and presented various examples in (most of) the nine plays whose theatrical features are discussed throughout that volume:[40] Odysseus successfully preventing Neoptolemus from returning the bow to Philoctetes, the latter's hand outstretched, is juxtaposed to his later failure to do so as the young hero puts the bow in the same outstretched hand; Hippolytus' joyful initial entrance with his band of merry men is set against his later departure into exile accompanied by them.[41] The concept of mirror scenes has been taken up by many subsequent studies, such as Gallagher's pairing of the Euripidean Electra's scenes with the Old Man and with Orestes, or Mitchell-Boyask's of the god-sent seizure suffered by Philoctetes with the healing appearance of the divine Hercules.[42] In addition to its intrinsic probability and interest, this paradigm aids our purposes in suggesting that audiences (or, as ever, some parts of them) can make thematically significant

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39 Taplin (1977b) 100; for his discussion of mirror-scenes, specifically in *Persians*, see 100–104.

40 Taplin (1978) 122–139. He remarks that "*OT* does not include, so far as I can see, any outstanding mirror scene" (131) but R. Griffith (1996) 57 makes a case for the prostration of the suppliants before Oedipus in the prologue and later before Teiresias.

41 Soph. *Phil.* 971–982 ~ 1222–1298, with Taplin (1978) 131–133; Eur. *Hipp.* 58–71 ~ 1098–101, with Taplin (1978) 134–135.

42 Gallagher (2003) 405; Mitchell-Boyask (2008) 168.

connections between theatrical scenes on the basis of their visual dimension. Of course, mirror scenes do not face the objections of limited knowledge and memory which might be made against visual allusions between different performances: everyone except late-comers and the extremely forgetful has the potential to recognize a mirror scene. However, the basic point that visual allusions can be made, recognized (without the aid of comedy's explicit labelling) and interpreted is an important one from which to proceed to less secure ground.

Much discussion of allusion between tragedies is focussed on verbal echoes, often treating them as written texts with little regard for the means by which these echoes might be recognized in performance.[43] Only a few have suggested the possibility of visual allusion between tragedies. Easterling puts forward as "an example of how one play might be designed to recall another through what was shown on stage and therefore make a reference that would be 'readable' by a large proportion of the spectators" the scene of Electra carrying the urn of funeral offerings in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*, echoed when Sophocles' eponymous Electra embraces the empty urn which she believes to hold Orestes' ashes, and when Euripides' heroine carries not an urn but a water-jar, in symbol of her reduced status.[44]

> Each of the later dramatists seems to exploit the power of the stage picture to recall another play, and to suggest to those of the spectators who recall the famous scene in *Libation-Bearers* that what they are seeing now has a new kind of message to offer.

Easterling does not address any of the problems we have noted in assuming that memory of a scene staged in 458 BC could be predicated for audiences of (probably) forty years later in the mid-410s, except to describe the Aeschylean scene as one "which made a great impression on vase-painters, and therefore, we may guess, on audiences". We might wonder whether the depiction of the scene on vases might be less an independent indication of its presence in the public memory than one of the factors contributing to that presence. However, the key aspect of Easterling's suggestion for our purposes, apart from being one of the rare arguments for a tragic visual allusion of any kind, is

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43 Among general studies of tragic allusion, see esp. Garner (1990) for the verbal approach. Thalmann (1993) is more nuanced and reflective on the issues, but still deals with the tragedies largely as written "texts" (the term is used throughout, in preference to "plays"). Aélion (1983) vol. 2: 11–147 deals with "schémas, thèmes et situations" such as supplication, vengeance, homecoming and sacrifice, but her treatment is more on the level of structures and dramatic patterning than on specific visual spectacles.

44 Easterling (1997b) 168–169. The two subsequent quotations are from the same pages.

that it shows how such allusions might be signalled without the explicitness of comedy or the proximity of occurring in the same play. The spectacle of a young woman with an urn would not in itself "stick out" for an audience as reminiscent of Electra in *Libation Bearers*, especially when the Sophoclean and Euripidean urns are used for such different purposes. Yet when the character is already identified as Electra and the context set as that of the imminent return of Orestes, the spectacle of *the same character* bearing an urn does offer the strong possibility of reminiscence, and then indeed the different uses of the vessel become the significant differences which make the allusion meaningful. We may therefore consider this an important general criterion for identifying a tragic visual allusion. Such allusions in tragedy are more susceptible to recognition when the scenes alluding and alluded to feature the same characters and/or the same plot.

As a variation on this scenario, just as the case of Electra and the urn might suggest how variations in the spectacle can underline the variations in an iteration of the *same* tragic plot, so a visual allusion might draw attention to parallelisms (and, as ever, distinctions) between two different tragic plots. Of course, unless the spectacle is so unique and unmistakable, its appearance in the alluding tragedy will not in itself be enough to recall the tragedy alluded to. This sort of allusion is most likely to be recognizable and meaningful if the plot of the alluding tragedy already has other, non-visual connections with that alluded to, such as the same characters or setting, or dramatizes a different episode in the same larger mythical narrative. An example from Attic tragedy which Sorum tentatively proposes is an allusion in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* to Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*:[45]

> [The] references in the prologue and first episode set both the mythological and theatrical scene for Clytemnestra's arrival on stage ensconced in a chariot, accompanied by her daughter and infant son, and welcomed by her husband, a tableau which may itself recall Agamemnon's arrival home in *Agamemnon*.

This is a very attractive suggestion. It has the virtue of recognizability, owing not only to the same characters' being involved but to the importance of Iphigenia's sacrifice as a motivation for the Aeschylean Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon. Yet it also has important and meaningful differences: the inversion of the roles as husband welcomes unsuspecting wife, the

[45] Sorum (1992) 537. She observes at n. 31 that Page considers the relevant lines an interpolation and as a result "[a]lthough the entrance of the family provides a stunning visual allusion, its inclusion is not vital to my argument in light of the number of Aeschylean references."

suggestive parallelism this also sets up between Agamemnon and Iphigenia as the welcomer proceeds to sacrifice one of the new arrivals. Such an allusion is obviously not as securely recognizable as those in comedy, but if we can accept the potential for striking scenes to enter and remain in the collective memory, then examples such as this are the most likely to trigger that memory and the most meaningful once it has been triggered.

Before we move onto Republican tragedy itself, one final category remains: the "cross-modal" cases of allusions to or by verbal descriptions of visual phenomena.[46] All theatre, with its limitations of space and technology, tends to be rich in such descriptions, but Graeco-Roman tragedy is especially so, owing to its (general) avoidance of the staging of violence and the substitution of such visual spectacle with the descriptive narrative of the messenger speech (and related phenomena such as prophecies). If we were to consider how the image conjured by one messenger speech might recall in the audience's mind the image conjured by another—say the image of Hippolytus being pursued by the sea-monster in Euripides' *Hippolytus* and Seneca's *Phaedra*—a case could certainly be made that the allusion is of one image to the other, even if both are produced by verbal means. Yet the line between visual and verbal allusion would be considerably blurred, arguably beyond the point of usefulness.

Perhaps more interesting, in visual terms at least, are cases which cross the boundary of verbal and visual, where the description of an image recalls an actual staging of that image; or indeed vice versa, if an image visible onstage evokes one from an earlier performance visible only to the mind's eye because described in a messenger speech. I shall discuss one possible example from Republican tragedy below, but let me offer an example which I have proposed elsewhere from Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*.[47] The disguised kinsman of Euripides responds to criticisms against the tragedian for betraying women's secret vices by providing a catalogue of those which he *hasn't* dramatized.[48] These include the scenario where a young adulterer flees from his lover's house with his head swathed. I have argued that this is an allusion to the scene in Euripides' lost *Hippolytos Kaluptomenos* where the eponymous character covers his head in shame at Phaedra's proposal of adultery. The audience's recognition of such an allusion is facilitated by Mnesilochus' prefacing the scurrilous anecdote with the rhetorical question

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46 On cross-modal allusions, see Ross (1981) 68–70.
47 See Cowan (2008) for more detail and implications beyond the issue of visual allusion.
48 Ar. *Thesm.* 466–519.

εἰ δὲ Φαίδραν λοιδορεῖ, / ἡμῖν τί τοῦτ' ἔστ'; ("If he abuses Phaedra, what is that to us?" Ar. *Thesm.* 497–498), almost explicitly contrasting the tragic scene with the scurrilous comic analogue which visually alludes to it. Yet the mention of Phaedra only provides the cue; it is the *image* of the young man fleeing with his head swathed, seen onstage in Euripides' tragedy and described in Aristophanes' comedy, which prompts the audience to make the connection between the two scenes.

Ecce iterum … Visual Allusions on the Republican Stage

And so, at last, to Rome. Many of the issues and objections mentioned in the last section apply also to the possibility of visual allusion in Republican drama, but there are marked differences. Fifth-century drama, and especially tragedy, had spread throughout the Greek and subsequently (to some extent simultaneously) the Roman world. Its plots, speeches, odes and spectacles could become familiar certainly to the educated and perhaps to a wide range of the potential audiences of *ludi scaenici*. Contact with Greek culture through Etruria, Magna Graecia, Sicily and numerous other routes can be traced at Rome from earliest times, and it is improbable that tragedy was not part of that culture.

In terms of the visual dimension, it is notable that the majority of the vases depicting scenes from Attic drama come from Magna Graecia. Many of the vases are self-explanatory, with labels for the characters, and would enable even someone who did not recognize the scene depicted to convince themselves that they did. Even these, though they are less valuable as evidence for pre-existing familiarity with Attic drama, could themselves serve to disseminate familiarity with tragic (and comic) stage-pictures even among those who had never seen a play.[49] Yet other vases offer less help and can be taken as evidence that the stage-picture was, for whatever reason, already familiar to viewers. To take one example which is suggestive for a visual allusion which I shall propose below, Taplin discusses an Apulian loutrophoros from the 330s depicting the blinding of Polymestor, whose details are only comprehensible to someone with a knowledge of Euripides' *Hecuba*, in which that action occurs.[50] It should also be noted that such representations of scenes from tragic myth (and, by extension, from

[49] On the performance and general reception of Attic drama in Magna Graecia, see esp. Allan (2001).

[50] "The play is needed in order to make full sense of the picture": Taplin (2007) 141–142, quoting from 142.

mythological tragedies) are also to be found on non-Greek artefacts from further north, in Latium and Etruria.[51] The availability of written texts to educated Romans would also promote familiarity with such visual features as can be deduced from dialogue. By the period between the mid-third and late second centuries, familiarity with Greek culture has grown still further through increased contact and eventual conquest.

Most important of all, however, is the fact that Roman drama, at least the *comoediae palliatae* and *fabulae crepidatae* which imitated Greek drama, was self-conscious and even self-advertising about its imitation of and relationship to that drama, in a way that, say, Euripides' allusions to Aeschylus were not. Republican drama, as we have already seen, demanded to be viewed at least partly as an imitation of Greek drama and hence its audiences are the more primed to pick up allusions to it. This allusive habit then persists once a Roman tradition has developed, so that viewers of the tragedies of Pacuvius and Accius can be expected to recognize allusions to stage-pictures from those of Naevius and Ennius, especially if (like Plautus' *Casina*) they were restaged following their first performance. Before finally approaching visual allusion in Republican tragedy, it will be worthwhile discussing it in Republican comedy.

Tragic allusion in Roman comedy is an immense topic, well beyond the scope of this chapter.[52] The hoary issue of whether such allusions "belong" to Plautus and Terence or to their Greek originals has been shown to be beside the point by Sharrock, who focuses instead on their reception by an audience whose knowledge of tragedy might derive from a number of parallel and even overlapping sources: "direct knowledge of Euripides … indirect knowledge of Euripides through Diphilus … direct knowledge of Ennius … indirect knowledge of Euripides through Ennius."[53] Roman audiences thus had plenty of opportunity to become sufficiently familiar with tragedy to recognize allusions to it. Much tragic allusion in Plautine and Terentian comedy is broadly generic, evoking (or caricaturing) the grand, overblown passions of desperate tragic heroes and heroines rather than echoing specific plots and plays. Even here, however, a significant visual element can be detected. For example, Andrews shows how Pardalisca's paratragic (false) description of Casina's madness at Pl. *Cas.* 621–719, though

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51 See esp. Wiseman (2000b).

52 Much of the scholarship focuses on Plautus' *Amphitruo*, but there are numerous items on tragic allusion in other plays, e.g. N.W. Slater (1985) 85 and Andrews (2004) on *Casina*, or Scafoglio (2005) on *Bacchides*. For general discussions, see esp. Fraenkel (2007) 49–53, 234–242 and now Sharrock (2009) 204–219.

53 Sharrock (2009) 205.

it does not allude exclusively to any specific tragic analogue, nevertheless "employs … conventional tragic correlations between male/outside and female/inside, but then inverts them in order to establish an even more complex relationship among genre, gender, and dramatic space."[54] *Amphitruo* may allude directly to Euripides' and Ennius' *Alcumena* and motivically to the former's *Bacchae*, but much of its tragic colour derives from the generic visual features of buskins and a tragic palace with a single door.[55] Thus it is clear that Plautus' and Terence's audiences could recognize a range of verbal and visual, generic and specific tragic allusions. Similar caution must be used when extrapolating from Plautine to Pacuvian allusion as from Aristophanic to Euripidean: New Comedy may lack its Old ancestor's extreme degree of fantasy and absurdism, but, at least in its Plautine incarnation, it maintains a healthy level of metatheatricality and self-consciousness. In particular, its evocation of (or explicit reference to) tragedy is often, like Aristophanes', of a generically agonistic nature.[56] *Explicit* self-consciousness and generic agonism are alien to Republican as to Attic tragedy, but *implicit* self-consciousness, metatheatricality, and *aemulatio within* the genre, already incipient in tragedies such as Sophocles' *Electra* and Euripides' *Orestes*, are an increasingly important aspect of Republican tragedy.[57]

With Republican tragedy, of course, we return to the problem of scanty evidence with which we began, now exacerbated by the difficulty of identifying, proving and interpreting visual allusions even in complete playscripts. However, some suggestions can be made. In particular, we must bear in mind the criteria which were found useful above for establishing a probable visual allusion in Attic tragedy. Visual reminiscences are most likely to be recognizable if they occur in a tragedy depicting either the same plot as the play alluded to or one with other marked similarities, such as sharing the same characters or dramatizing a different episode from the same broader mythical sequence. In the first category, it is tempting to speculate how, among tragedies on the same theme by different Republican dramatists, the later play might have recalled and engaged with the earlier, and some examples offer intriguing visual possibilities. Only one, totally unilluminating fragment

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54 Andrews (2004) *passim*, quoting from 448.

55 On the *Amphitruo* and the *Bacchae*, see Z. Stewart (1958) and N.W. Slater (1990a).

56 E.g. Sharrock (2009) 209 on Pl. *Rud.* 83–88: "Sceparnio pushes aside Arcturus' epic and tragic pomposity … with an Aristophanic joke about windy words."

57 Sophocles: Ringer (1998); Euripides: Zeitlin (2003 [1980]); stimulating thoughts on metatheatricality in Republican tragedy are prominent in the studies of Erasmo (2004) and Boyle (2006), though both tend to adopt rather too broad a definition of the phenomenon.

survives from Accius' *Hecuba*, but we can only wonder how the innovative and revisionist young Turk of the three great Republican tragedians might have engaged with Ennius' staging (also unknown) of Polydorus' ghost, the discovery of his body, and the blinding of Polymestor, especially following Pacuvius' subsequent radical rewriting of the myth in his *Iliona*.[58] Likewise, Accius' *Andromeda* clearly engaged with Ennius' version (itself closely imitating Euripides'), and fr. 111 R^3=71 W of the play (*misera obualla saxo sento paedore alguque et fame*, "wretched, surrounded by a rampart of rugged rock, with filth and cold and hunger") surely describe the eponymous heroine waiting for the sea-monster. It could either be delivered by Andromeda herself while she is onstage bound to the crag, thus recalling what was surely Ennius' dramatization of the same scene in imitation of Euripides' prologue,[59] or it could be a "cross-modal" allusion whereby what was staged in Ennius was narrated in an Accian messenger-speech.[60] Such speculations must remain just that, and any conclusions drawn from them will inevitably be based on circular arguments, but that later Republican tragedians dramatized the same plots—and plots which lend themselves to striking visual effects—as their predecessors, without in some way evoking the earlier staging seems, to say the least, unlikely.

Yet the most suggestive examples of probable visual allusion in Republican tragedy come in plays which deal not with the same plot as a predecessor, but with a variation on or sequel to it. This phenomenon is most prominent in the tragedies of Pacuvius and it has become almost a critical topos to describe some of his plays as "sequels", and in particular sequels to those of his uncle, Ennius.[61] The two examples on which we shall focus are the *Medus*, which depicts Medea's return to Colchis after her time in Iolcus, Corinth and

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58 Enn. *Hecuba* fr. 172 R^3=213 W (*uide hunc meae in quem lacrumae guttatim cadunt*. "Look at this boy on whom my tears fall drop by drop"), with its close rendering of Eur. *Hec.* 760 (ὁρᾷς νεκρὸν τόνδ' οὗ καταστάζω δάκρυ;) make it clear at least that Hecuba did lament over Polydorus' body onstage. On Pacuvius' *Iliona*, see below.

59 Enn. *Andromeda* fr. 95–96 R^3=117–118 W (⟨*nox sacra*⟩ *quae caua caeli / signitenentibus conficis bigis*) closely render Eur. *Andromeda* fr. 114 Kannicht (ὦ νὺξ ἱερά, / ὡς μακρὸν ἵππευμα διώκεις / ἀστεροειδέα νῶτα διφρεύουσ' / αἰθέρος ἱερᾶς / τοῦ σεμνοτάτου δι' 'Ολύμπου), whose staging is clearly indicated by the parody in Ar. *Thesm.* which also preserves the lines.

60 There is some indication from the fragments that Accius' play may have started with an earlier stage of the myth, perhaps with negotiations between Cepheus and Perseus. On all three Andromeda plays (as well as those by Sophocles and Livius Andronicus), see Klimek-Winter (1993).

61 Fantham (2003) 102–103; Manuwald (2003) 39; Boyle (2006) 88–89. It is very tempting to read this situation as a very reified example of Bloom's Oedipal anxiety of influence—a temptation perhaps not entirely to be resisted. Cf. Fantham (2003) 99: "how would it affect your creative originality to reach fifty still in the shadow of your uncle?"

Athens, and which inevitably demands comparison with Euripides' *Medea* and Ennius' *Medea Exul*, and the *Iliona*, set in Thrace in the aftermath of the Trojan War and giving a rather different version of the fates of Polydorus and Polymestor to that depicted in Euripides' and Ennius' *Hecuba*. Castle, writing with reference to 18th century novels, argues that "only charismatic texts, those with an unusually powerful effect on a large reading public, typically generate sequels. … So powerful is the charismatic story that it creates in readers a desire for 'more of the same.'"[62] and the same might be said of theatrical audiences. She goes on to note that readers (again we might add "and audiences") "unconsciously … persist in demanding the impossible: that the sequel be different, but also *exactly the same*."[63] This interplay of similarity and difference is perhaps the essential quality of the sequel and one which optical allusion, with its replication of an earlier visual image but difference of context and meaning, is peculiarly suited to dramatizing. Sequels can also encode in themselves a self-assertive, even polemical form of *aemulatio*. Garber asserts that "the sequel 'corrects' and amplifies, gratifying a desire not only for continuation but also for happy endings", an operation which certainly applies to both the *Medus* and the *Iliona*, while Picker's study of unauthorized sequels to George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* shows cases where "the sequel is a reproach", as it criticizes and corrects what is felt to be flawed in the original.[64] The ways in which Pacuvius both indicates and exploits his tragedies' status as sequels are diverse and I shall only focus here on the element of visual allusion.

The plot of Pacuvius' *Iliona* can be reconstructed, with a degree of caution and using further evidence from the surviving fragments and other testimonia, from Hyginus *Fabula* 109.[65] The backstory is that Priam and Hecuba's daughter Iliona has been married to the Thracian king, Polymestor, and their son Polydorus entrusted to him for safekeeping during the Trojan War. Iliona swaps the identities of Polydorus and Deipylus, her own son by Polymestor, bringing them up under each other's name, so that, if anything should happen to the real Polydorus, she could return Deipylus to her parents instead.[66] When the Greeks capture Troy, Agamemnon persuades Polymestor,

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62 Castle (1986) 183.

63 Castle (1986) 184, her italics.

64 Garber (2003) 75; Picker (2006) 363.

65 On the differences between the versions, see Schierl (2006) 314–315.

66 [*Polydorum*] *illa pro filio suo educauit; Deipylum autem, quem ex Polymnestore procreauerat, pro suo fratre educauit, ut, si alteri eorum quid foret, parentibus praestaret*. "… she brought [Polydorus] up in place of her own son; Deipylus, however, whom she had borne to

through bribery and the offer of marriage to Electra, to kill Polydorus, but owing to the swap, he kills his own son, Deipylus, in the belief that he is Polydorus. Deipylus's ghost reveals his death to his mother in a dream and begs for burial. Meanwhile, Polydorus has visited Delphi "to enquire about his parents" (*de parentibus suis sciscitatum*, Hyg. *Fab.* 109.3; his motivation is obscure) and has been told that his homeland is destroyed, his father killed and his mother enslaved. Puzzled to find that the situation in Thrace is rather different from this, he is enlightened as to his true identity by Iliona. The two then blind and kill Polymestor.

As this summary shows, the play is not strictly a sequel to Euripides' *Hecuba* in that it does not follow on from the events in that play but rather corrects them, providing a variant.[67] However, it shares many of the features which we have seen to be characteristic of sequels. It deals with several of the same characters as the "charismatic original"; with its similar but distinct plot, it manages to be both "more of the same" and satisfyingly different; it "amplifies" and "corrects", satisfying the audience's desire for a "happy ending" (of a sort). The confusion of identities, eventually rectified through an anagnorisis—a recurrent feature of Pacuvian tragedy[68]—is also mimetic of the play' status as resembling the *Hecuba* but not quite being it. We might even tentatively detect a troping of the "filial" relationship which a sequel has to its original in the centrality of Iliona, the daughter of Hecuba, in the *Iliona*, the sequel to the *Hecuba*.[69] This relationship, both between queens and between plays, would have been most strikingly brought out by what is arguably the most famous scene in Republican tragedy, the appearance of Deipylus' ghost to the sleeping Iliona, requesting burial (Pac. *Iliona* fr. 197–201 R^3 = 205–210 W):[70]

> *mater, te appello, tu, quae curam somno suspensam leuas*
> *neque te mei miseret, surge et sepeli natum* ⟨...⟩
> *prius quam ferae uolucresque* ⟨...⟩
> *neu reliquias semesas sireis*[71] *denudatis ossibus*
> *per terram sanie delibutas foede diuexarier.*

Polymestor, she brought up in place of her brother so that, if anything were to happen to the other one, she could render him to her parents." Hyg. *Fab.* 109.1.

67 On the *Iliona*, see esp. Ribbeck (1875) 232–239; Wallach (1979); Manuwald (2000b), (2003); Fantham (2003) 112–114; Schierl (2006) 312–341.

68 N.W. Slater (2000); Fantham (2003); Manuwald (2003) 43–54; Boyle (2006) 95–96.

69 On filiation as a trope for literary "descent", see Ricks (1976) and Hardie (1993) 98–119.

70 On this scene, Beare (1950) 80–81; Wallach (1979); Manuwald (2003) 117; Boyle (2006) 94–95; Schierl (2006) 318–319 and 324–327.

71 I follow Schierl in printing Pohlenz's emendation of the paradosis *semiassi reis*. Ribbeck and, following him, Warmington read *quaeso meas sieris*.

> Mother, I call on you, you, who lighten your care by floating it in sleep
> and have no pity for me. Arise and bury your son ….
> before the beasts and birds … ⟨consume my whole corpse⟩ …
> and do not let my half-eaten remains, the bone stripped bare,
> stained with blood, be disgracefully dragged to and fro about the land.

Iliona awakes and poignantly calls for the ghost to stay (202 R^3 = 211 W)

> *age, adsta, mane, audi!*
> *iteradum eadem ista mihi* ⟨…⟩

> Come, stay there, wait, listen!
> Just one more time ⟨speak⟩ those same words to me

Cicero alludes several times to the scene,[72] and some of the details of its staging emerge in the comments of the *Scholia Bobiensia* on Cic. *Pro Sestio* 126 and those of Porphyrio and [Acro] on Horace, *Saturae* 2.3.60–62, the latter depicting the notorious scene when the actor playing Iliona, one Fufius, could not be woken from a real, drunken sleep by Deipylus, so that the whole audience bellowed "Mother, I call on you!" It is clear from all these testimonia that the scene was of immense visual power. When Cicero compares Appius Claudius Pulcher's suddenly popping out from beneath the benches of the *comitia* "as if he were going to say *mater te appello*", there is no further resonance with the Pacuvian scene except the visual parallel, a clear indication that Deipylus' ghost had sufficient impact to stand as paradigmatic for such a sudden appearance.[73] The *Scholia Bobiensia ad loc.* emphasize the strikingly (but characteristically) sombre costume of the ghost (*sordidatus et lugubri habitu, ut solent qui pro mortuis inducuntur*, "filthy and dressed in mourning garb, as is the habit of actors playing dead people").[74] When Cicero is ridiculing the irrationality of the ghost's desire for burial at *Tusc.* 1.106, he points the absurdity by emphasizing how the dramaturgy of the scene (including its musical dimension) magnifies the misplaced pathos felt by the audience.

This was clearly a scene which resonated for Roman audiences, and there is no reason to believe that this impact was not felt from its first performance. Yet part of its significance also derives from its visual allusion to the prologue

[72] *Tusc.* 1.106 preserve the lines above. Other references at *Sest.* 126 and *Ac.* 2.88.

[73] I take the suddenness of Appius' appearance to be the main point of the allusion but Kaster (2006) 359 plausibly suggests that "we are to understand that Appius, emerging from beneath the planks, looked like a shade arising from Hades."

[74] Notoriously, both *Schol. Bob.* and Porphyrio refer to the ghost as that of Polydorus rather than Deipylus, but this is clearly a confusion arising from Pacuvius' (and Iliona's) swapping of their names. See Wallach (1979) and Schierl (2006) 318–319 for full discussion.

of Euripides' *Hecuba* and, it is reasonable to assume, Ennius' version of the same play.[75] Like Deipylus' ghost, Polydorus' refers to the pitiful state of his unburied corpse, while his shade stands over his mother (Eur. *Hec.* 28–31):

> κεῖμαι δ' ἐπ' ἀκταῖς, ἄλλοτ' ἐν πόντου σάλωι,
> πολλοῖς διαύλοις κυμάτων φορούμενος,
> ἄκλαυτος ἄταφος· νῦν δ' ὑπὲρ μητρὸς φίλης
> Ἑκάβης ἀίσσω, σῶμ' ἐρημώσας ἐμόν …
>
> I lie sometimes on the shore, sometimes in the swell of the sea, borne along by the frequent ebb and flow of the waves, unwept, unburied; but now I dart above my own dear mother Hekabe, having abandoned my own body …

The staging of this scene in Euripides is notoriously difficult to establish, particularly with respect to whether Polydorus' ghost appears on the *skēnē*, on the *mēkhanē*, or at stage level.[76] However, Lane's argument that it appears at stage level, standing over the sleeping Hecuba (inside the open door of the *skēnē*, since she must enter at 59) so that "there is an intimacy between mother and son which is theatrically suggestive of Polydorus' desire to be reunited with her" is attractive.[77] Of course, Euripides' ghost does not address Hecuba directly (except to apostrophize her unheard at 55–58) and indeed explicitly avoids contact with his mother in order to avoid frightening her further (52–54). Yet that very reference to her as "being afraid of the vision of me" (φάντασμα δειμαίνουσ' ἐμόν, 54), combined with her own (lexically related) lyric description of her "fears, visions" (δείμασι, φάσμασιν; 68–82, quoting from 70), might suggest that the ghost's appearance and Hecuba's dream are different modes of representing the same action.[78] If so, Pacuvius' visual allusion would skillfully (and learnedly) combine what Euripides' (and probably Ennius') audience had *seen* in the ghost prologue and what they had *heard* Hecuba's lyric narrative conjure before their mind's eyes.[79]

Yet the visual allusion does not only recall the earlier scene and amplify what was implicit in it. The appearance of Deipylus' ghost serves polemically

75 Eur. *Hec.* 1–58. No fragment of Ennius' *Hecuba* can be securely assigned to the prologue, but *undantem salum* (162 R^3=202 W) seems a likely rendering of οἶδμ' ἁλός (Eur. *Hec.* 26). Jocelyn (1967) 303–304 remarks on Gellius' assertion (11.4) that Ennius's version closely imitated Euripides that "it has a reliability quite lacking in apparently similar assertions by Varro and Cicero". On the two plays, see also Scafoglio (2007).

76 Mossman (1995) 50–51; Lane (2007).

77 Lane (2007) 292.

78 Cf. Scafoglio (2006) 33–34.

79 In addition to this visual dimension to the allusion, *doctus Pacuuius* may be alluding to the appearance of Patroclus' ghost to Achilles at *Il.* 23.65–107, which strongly influenced Euripides and which Deipylus' ghost even more strongly recalls.

to correct the *Hecuba* plays which featured the appearance of Polydorus' ghost. Pacuvius' Polydorus, of course, is not dead and was not murdered by Polymestor, although several characters such as Polymestor and perhaps the real Polydorus himself believe this to be the case. Pacuvius' scene corrects this not only by representing the "real" situation whereby it is Deipylus who is dead and unburied, but by having his ghost explain the situation to Iliona and at the same time to the audience. It is tempting to detect a *double entendre* even in the famous phrase *mater te appello*. Of course, it primarily means "mother, I call on you and beseech you for aid",[80] but while Deipylus does not say *matr<u>em</u> te appello*, there is still a hint that the woman he is addressing is to be "called" his mother and not his sister as viewers of Ennius might expect, were Polydorus' ghost to address Iliona.[81] Such correction of the parallel misunderstandings of characters and audiences must have continued throughout the play. The *anagnorisis* between Iliona and Polydorus, with the latter freshly returned from Delphi with confusing information about his parents, must have shaped to recall Oedipus' discovery of his identity, only to have veered into a brother-and-sister reunion for revenge reminiscent of Orestes and Electra.[82] While Oedipus is strikingly absent from Republican tragedy (except for a bit part in Accius' *Phoenissae*), such an *anagnorisis* between the children of Agamemnon probably featured in Pacuvius' own *Dulorestes*. The climactic blinding and murder of Polymestor, though it almost certainly took place offstage, is also a combinatorial allusion to Hecuba's two acts of revenge in Euripides and Ennius. Polymestor's sons cannot be killed as in those plays, since he only had one and he himself killed him, so both his own Euripidean punishment and that of his children must be visited upon him alone.[83] This bizarre excess only makes sense as an

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80 *TLL* II.273.46–61 s.v. I.3 *imploro, precor, oro*. Our line is the earliest instance cited.

81 *TLL* II.274.51–275.34, s.v. II.2 *voco, nomino, significo*, with eight instances from comedy, among which note esp. Pl. *Epid.* 589: *si me appellet filiam, matrem vocem*. The audience's expectations about the ghost's identity partly depend on what information about the swapping of the children and the murder has been imparted in the prologue or other scenes (if any) prior to the ghost's appearance. However, even if they have been explicitly told that Polymestor has killed Deipylus thinking he is Polydorus, those familiar with the canonical Euripidean and Ennian version might still irrationally "expect" the ghost to be Polydorus.

82 Fr. 204 R^3=213 W (*quos ego ita ut uolui offendo incolumis*, "I find them safe and well, just as I wished") would fit Polydorus' surprise at finding Polymestor and Iliona, his supposed parents, unharmed in spite of the oracle. Similarly, fr. 211 R^3=214 W (*ne porro te error, qui nunc lactat, maceret*, "so that the misunderstanding which now misleads you should not torment you") makes sense as Iliona's preamble to telling her brother the truth.

83 Cf. Schierl (2006) 317.

allusion to the two Euripidean punishments, which are thus brought forcibly to mind. The blinded Polymestor makes a memorable entrance singing agonized dochmiacs at Eur. *Hec.* 1056, and while the only surviving fragment of the *Iliona* referring to the blinding is (presumably) Iliona's demand that Polydorus help her perform it,[84] it would seem at least plausible that the eyeless king might appear before exiting again to be killed, rather than the whole two-tier revenge's being reported in a single messenger speech.[85] In support of the possibility that Pacuvius' Polymestor entered after his blinding, it is tempting to interpret the brief exchange in fr. 210 R^3 = 223 W (A: *cur inlaqueetur hic*? B: *mecum altercas? tace!*, "⟨Polydorus?⟩:—Why should this man be entangled? ⟨Iliona?⟩:—Are you arguing with me? Shut up!") as indicating the helplessness of the blinded Polymestor, its acknowledgement by Polydorus, and the implacability of Iliona. In any case, whether audiences at the *ludi scaenici* saw the blind Polymestor, as they saw his Euripidean and Ennian equivalents, about to suffer the narrated fate of his sons in those earlier plays, or whether a Pacuvian narrative conjured an image reminiscent of an Ennian stage-picture, a final visual allusion was used to connect the plays and to assert the superiority of the *Iliona*.

Pacuvius' *Medus* is more precisely a sequel to Euripides' *Medea* and Ennius' *Medea Exul* in that in follows on (after an interval) from the plot of those plays and does not presuppose that events unfolded differently from the way in which they depicted them. Like the *Iliona*, it tropes its status as sequel through the relationship of its eponymous character to that of its predecessors: Medus is the son of Medea, just as *Medus* is *Medea*'s sequel, though, unlike Hecuba, Medea herself plays a central role in her son's tragedy. The plot can, again, be largely reconstructed from Hyginus (*Fab.* 27), though again the fragments indicate some important scenes, notably a touching *anagnorisis* and reconciliation between Medea and Aeëtes, which are not reflected in the summary. Medus, Medea's son by the Athenian king Aegeus, while searching for his mother, is shipwrecked and captured in Colchis, where Aeëtes' throne has been usurped by his brother Perses. Since the usurper had received an oracle predicting his death at the hands of Aeëtes' offspring,

[84] *fac ut coepisti hanc operam mihi des perpetem: / oculis traxerim* … ("See to it that, in the same way as you have begun, you render this help to me in future: let me pull [the sight] from his eyes!") 208–209 R^3=220–221 W. I follow Schierl's acceptance of the paradosis of the second line and suggestion *exempli gratia* of the supplement *aciem*. Ribbeck emends to *oculos transaxim*, and Warmington follows him.

[85] I use messenger speech as a generic term for a narrative of offstage events, but fr. 215 R^3=224 W is clearly from the first-person narrative of one of the avengers.

Medus claims to be Hippotes, son of Creon, the late king of Corinth whom Medea had killed along with his daughter, but is still imprisoned. Meanwhile, Medea arrives in her dragon-chariot and falsely tells Perses that she is a priestess of Diana and can deliver Colchis from its current famine. When she learns that Perses is holding 'Hippotes' (as Medus claims to be), she assumes that he has come to avenge his father and persuades Perses that the young man is Medus, sent by Medea to kill him; she asks the king to hand him over to her to be killed. When Medus is led out, a recognition takes place and Medea urges him to avenge Aeëtes by killing Perses. This he does and establishes the kingdom of Media.

There are many facets to the relationship which Pacuvius establishes between his sequel and the canonical Medea-tragedies which it follows, especially in his depiction of the character of Medea herself, and I have discussed some of these elsewhere.[86] A number of visual allusions might have pointed the relationship: for instance, Medea's duplicitous interview with the tyrannical Perses might have recalled that with Creon; or her (initially murderous) confrontation, bearing a sword, of her (unrecognized) son Medus might have recalled her exit into the *skēnē* to kill her and Jason's sons. Here I wish briefly to focus on one moment of visual allusion, one that probably belongs to the category of "cross-modal allusion" between visual representation and ecphrastic narrative which we noted at the end of the last section. That Medea arrived in her dragon-chariot is attested not only by the unreliable Hyginus (*Fab.* 29.3: *quo* [i.e. to Colchis] *Medea in curru iunctis draconibus cum uenisset* …) but also by Cicero; it is also clearly referred to by two of the surviving fragments, one securely assigned to the *Medus* by Nonius (*linguae bisulcis actu crispo fulgere*, "their forked tongues flashed like lightning with their vibrating motion", fr. 229 R^3 = 243 W) and one from Cicero very probably belonging to it (*angues ingentes alites iuncti iugo*, "enormous winged serpents joined by a yoke", fr. 242 W = *inc. fab.* 397 R^3). These senarii most plausibly derive from a messenger-speech describing Medea's arrival. Some scholars have taken Cicero's reference to *illo Pacuuiano … curru* (*Rep.* 3.14) as indicating that she entered using a Roman version of the *mēkhanē*. Further support for this thesis has been drawn from allusions to Medea's dragon-chariot in Lucilius, Varro, and Augustine which are less obviously connected with the *Medus*, as opposed to one of the *Medea*

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86 Cowan (2010) 45–48. Among other discussions of the *Medus*, see esp. Ribbeck (1875) 318–325; Dondoni (1958) 95–99; Della Casa (1974); Arcellaschi (1990) 101–161; Nosarti (1993); Fantham (2003) 108–112; Schierl (2002) and (2006) 342–385.

plays.[87] Yet, quite apart from issues of stage technology in the Republic,[88] it seems improbable that such a spectacular entrance, having been enacted on-stage, would be duplicated in the narrative of a messenger-speech. In terms of the presence of the visual allusion, it is ultimately unimportant whether the dragon-chariot appeared onstage in the *Medus* or not. A direct visual reminiscence of the chariot so famous from the exodos of Euripides' *Medea*, from numerous vase-paintings,[89] and possibly from Ennius' *Medea Exul* (though this again raises the issue of a Republican *mēkhanē*) would be immensely effective. Yet a "cross-modal" allusion would almost point the reminiscence more, as the messenger recalls and recreates his visual experience of seeing the dragon-chariot in a way parallel to the audience's recollection of their visual experience of seeing Medea's escape from Corinth. In either case, the visual allusion serves an important purpose in connecting the Medea of this play with Euripides' and Ennius' heroine. In mythological "real-time", even allowing for the miraculously restored fertility of Aegeus, the conception, gestation and maturation of Medus would require about sixteen years and nine months to have elapsed between the end of the *Medea* and the opening of the *Medus*. Yet the image of Medea arriving at Colchis in her dragon-chariot, be it in the mind's or the actual eyes of the audience, must theatrically suggest that the same infanticidal, regicidal barbarian witch is flying into this tragedy, almost with the blood of her children still dripping from her hands. It is with this visual connection, regardless of the dictates of chronology, in mind that the audience can make its judgement as to whether Medea's same-but-different actions in this sequel indicate that "hier ist die Zauberin und Intrigantin übrig geblieben" or whether "le dénouement apportera une complète réhabilitation de Médée en tant que mère et en tant que fille." Perhaps, as I have argued elsewhere, they might ask themselves "need we choose between the same old Medea and a new, positive Medea—is not the point that they are overlapping, even identical?"[90]

Limitations of space, combined with the even greater paucity of evidence on one side and the overabundance of critical discussion on the other, prevent me from extensive discussion of two of the main ways in which

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[87] Full discussion of the issues at Schierl (2006) 348–349.

[88] See Beacham (1991) 181–182 and Boyle (2006) 188 for discussion of Pollux 4.127–132 and the question of whether use of the *mēkhanē* was already a feature of the Republican stage.

[89] Taplin (2007) 117–125 discusses a Lucanian hydra and calyx-crater and an Apulian amphora, all depicting the flight in the chariot. On the second of these, see also Revermann (2010).

[90] Ribbeck (1875) 325; Arcellaschi (1990) 245; Cowan (2010) 47.

Republican tragedy alluded visually to the Roman world outside the time and space of the *ludi scaenici* and back again. So many excellent studies have been made of the use of late Republican re-stagings of tragedy to allude to contemporary events (often, as in the opening of Pompey's theatre, with a significant visual dimension) that I shall simply direct the reader to the existing scholarship.[91] The fragments of *fabulae praetextae* are, if anything, even more scanty than those of tragedy and as a result offer even less indication of staging. It is not even clear how various events which surely must have been featured in particular *praetextae* were represented, whether enacted onstage, narrated in messenger-speeches, or represented in a combination of the two—for instance, Fulvius Nobilior's capture of the eponymous city in Ennius' *Ambracia*, the rape of Lucretia in Accius' *Brutus* or the *deuotio* of Decius in his *Aeneades siue Decius*. It does seem clear, however, that the formal features of *praetextae* were modelled closely on those of tragedies, and the reworking of Atossa's dream from Aeschylus' *Persians* in Accius' *Brutus* suggests that content too connected the genres.[92] On this basis, it would seem plausible that, as with this verbal and structural allusion in the *Brutus*, visual aspects of *praetextae* might evoke not just the generic scenic conventions of tragedy but specific scenes and tableaux from specific plays. To go further is to speculate even more than we have hitherto. Yet if we accept the verbal echo of Euripides' *Phoenissae* which La Penna detects in the sole fragment of Ennius' *Sabinae*,[93] we might also wonder whether the successful intervention of Hersilia and the Sabine women in the war between their husbands and their fathers might have carried a visual reminiscence of Jocasta's unsuccessful intercession with Polynices in his war against Eteocles. Did anything, we might still further wonder, in the visual representation of Accius' Decius and his self-sacrifice recall Menoeceus in the same dramatist's *Phoenissae*?[94] Sadly, wonder is all we can do in the current state of the evidence, wonder and hope for miracles from Herculaneum.

With that, we emerge from the *cauea* and from our world of speculation on the visual dimension of Republican tragedy, visual allusion in classical drama as a whole, and on the particularly elusive intersection of the two. Little

[91] Beacham (1991) 156–163; Champlin (2003) 295–305; Erasmo (2004) 81–101; Boyle (2006) 143–159, *inter alia*.

[92] Acc. *Brutus* fr. 17–38 W; Aesch. *Pers*. 166–225. On the allusion, see Erasmo (2004) 92–94.

[93] *cum spolia generis detraxeritis, / quam inscriptionem dabitis?* Enn. *Sabinae* fr. *praet*. 5–6 R^3=379–380, with Eur. *Phoen*. 571–577 … τροπαῖα πῶς ἄρα στήσεις Διί … καὶ σκῦλα γράψεις πῶς …;, and La Penna (2000) 247.

[94] For a full discussion of this play see Jocelyn (2000).

that I have proposed can be incontrovertibly proven, but I hope both that a degree of plausibility may be found in the hypothesis that visual allusion was a feature, and perhaps a particularly marked feature, of Republican drama, and that one day the papyri of Herculaneum may provide the evidence with which the hypothesis can be tested.

ANICIUS VORTIT BARBARE: THE SCENIC GAMES OF L. ANICIUS GALLUS AND THE AESTHETICS OF GREEK AND ROMAN PERFORMANCE*

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In 167 BCE, Rome's inhabitants beheld a somewhat bizarre yet highly significant public spectacle. Bizarre because of its seemingly incongruous conflation of the refined, Greek, and scripted with the raucous, barbarous, and spontaneous; significant because it inspired an eyewitness account of a staged performance contemporary with Terence. This chapter examines the victory games offered by the Roman *imperator* L. Anicius Gallus as a reflection of performance aesthetics for theatrical *ludi*. Anicius' spectacle celebrates a Plautine aesthetic by subjecting Greek modes and performers to the whims of Roman adaptors and spectators. Like Plautus, Anicius crowds his stage with a boisterous conflation of Greek and Roman elements. Like an impresario, the Roman *imperator* assumes the role of a Plautine clever slave who directs his army of performers in feigned improvisation. The chaos onstage is only apparent, for it is a scripted assault upon and redeployment of Greek modes of performance. Anicius probably presented his spectacle on the Quirinalia, a Feast of Fools that could inspire and authorize the mayhem. Our account of Anicius' games only survives through the Greek gaze of Polybius and a subsequent filter of Athenaeus. Polybius, blinkered by "inappropriate expectations," condemns the show as an embarrassing debacle, and critical reception has often adopted his perspective in considering them "a paradigm of Roman boorishness."[1] Terence might have agreed, for his plays represent an attenuating reaction to the bombastic Plautine and Anician adaptations of Greek theatrical culture. Terence's prologues laud his plays by, *inter alia*, disparaging both the sort of public performance Anicius provided and those spectators who preferred it.

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[1] Goldberg (1995) 38–39, reacting to such views. The present study agrees with and expands upon the earlier analyses of Goldberg and Gruen (1992).

Our account of Anicius' games comes from Polybius Book 30.22, a fragment that survives thanks to Athenaeus, who selected it for the climax of a section on kings and generals who were jokesters (γελωτοποιοί, 14.613d–15e):

> And Lucius Anicius, who had been the Roman general, conquered Illyria and brought back as prisoner of war Genthius the king of the Illyrians, along with his children. In celebrating his victory games in Rome, he produced absolutely ludicrous events,[2] as Polybius records in his *History*, Book XXX. You see, after sending for the most famous theatrical artists (τεχνῖται) from Greece and after constructing a very large stage in the Circus Maximus, he first brought on the aulos-players all together. These were Theodorus of Boeotia, Theopompus, Hermippus, and Lysimachus, who were very famous. And so, after stationing them on the stage, he ordered them to play all together to accompany the chorus. While they were playing through the musical scores in harmony with the rhythmic dance,[3] Anicius sent word to them that they were not playing well. He ordered them to show more competitive spirit. And when they expressed puzzlement, one of the lictors demonstrated that they should turn around and march against each other and make a sort of battle. The aulos-players quickly got the idea, and after receiving [a command?] familiar to their own wantonness, they created a huge melee. The aulos-players, after making the dancers in the middle pivot in unison against those on the edges, marched against each other, blowing nonsense and playing their auloi in discord. And the dancers, echoing them[4] and mounting the stage, charged their opponents and retreated again in turn. And when one of the dancers, tucking up his robe at the right moment, turned around and raised his fists as if boxing against the aulos-player charging him, then indeed there came wild clapping and roaring from the spectators. And while these were still fighting in battle formation, two dancers with a music band were brought into the orchestra, and four boxers climbed the stage, along with buglers and trumpeters. And with all these men struggling together, the result was indescribable. But concerning the tragic actors, Polybius says that, "If I tried to recount it, I would seem to be making a mockery …" After Ulpian had narrated these events and everyone burst out laughing at these Anician spectacles,[5] there arose some comments about the so-called πλάνοι …

The basic facts are fairly clear. A huge stage was built for the occasion in the Circus Maximus, a venue used for theatrical *ludi*, including the

[2] παντὸς γέλωτος ἄξια: either "to provoke a great deal of laughter" (Olson (2011) 109) or "worthy of complete ridicule" (cf. Euripides, *Heraclidae* 507).

[3] Walbank (1979) 446: "it is not clear whether these are the movements of the musicians or of the dancers."

[4] We do not know how the chorus echoed the aulos-players, though the verb *epiktupountes* suggests stamping their feet. Olson (2011) 109 renders it: "stamping their feet and shaking their costumes in time with the pipe-players."

[5] Athenaeus puns on Anicius and *A-nikioi*, "invincible."

licentious mimes of the Floralia (Wiseman 2006). The Circus' breadth and flatness provided ample capacity, and tiered seating could afford superior sightlines for viewing the choreography of the performers (Goldberg (1995) 39). The precise shape of the performance area is unclear. Athenaeus' account identifies an orchestra (dancing space) and a stage, called both a *skênê* and a *proskênion*.[6] Anicius summoned and presumably paid for famous Greek theatrical artists, including a chorus of unstated size, four aulos-players, dancers, other musicians, and tragic actors. The account leaves unspecified whether the four boxers, buglers, and trumpeters were Greek or Roman. In the midst of the very first act, that of the four *auletai* with a dancing chorus, a lictor came forward at Anicius' command either to initiate or to mark a surprising twist in the entertainment. The lictor ὑπέδειξεν–perhaps demonstrated verbally, perhaps mimed—to begin a mock battle. A melee ensued, first in the orchestra, then on the stage, to the crowd's delight.

Two factors of preservation complicate interpretation of the spectacle. First, the concluding direct quotation about the tragic performers suggests that Athenaeus may be embellishing, abbreviating, or otherwise paraphrasing Polybius throughout the passage. In particular, παντὸς γέλωτος ἄξια presents a crux: does Athenaeus laugh *with* Anicius and the Romans at an extravagant joke? Or, sharing Polybius' disdain, does Athenaeus laugh *at* Anicius as buffoon? Since Athenaeus includes the anecdote to exemplify kings and generals who appreciated and cracked jokes, the context presents Anicius' spectacle, though quite different in nature and scale from verbal quips, as a prank rather than a disaster. Second, Polybius was a hostile witness who likely came to the show with unsuitable expectations that significantly distorted his assessment. He was a Greek aristocrat brought as hostage to Italy late in 168 after the defeat of Perseus at Pydna. Anicius' games might have been one of his formative impressions of the conquering Romans, and the abuse of eminent Greek artists likely offended his nationalism. Polybius' aesthetic values are hard to deduce from his *Histories*. Although he frequently quotes Homer, he shuns discussion of drama.[7] For all his analytic virtues, Poly-

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[6] Walbank (1979) 446 observes that since Polybius uses *skênê* and *proskênion* interchangeably, we should not assume a proscenium; Günther (2002) 128–129 believes that stage and proscenium offered separate performance spaces. Klar (2006) 172 speculates that Anicius used a *scaenae frons* to display triumphal booty.

[7] The only comic dramatist named in the extant *Histories* is the obscure Archedicus (12.13). Polybius mentions Euripides four times, but never Sophocles nor Aeschylus, nor any Latin dramatist. Nevertheless, he does mark the potential for dramatic pageantry to inculcate values when his discussion of Roman superstition credits *tragoedia* with instructing the plebs (6.56.8–11).

bius apparently was no aficionado of the theater. He did, however, see great pedagogical value in music and dance, and the public performance of such by youths in the theaters.[8] Polybius became a great admirer of Aemilius Paullus and an intimate companion of the young Scipio Aemilianus, both highly cultured and Philhellenic statesmen of the mid-second century. Whether or not Polybius ever saw himself as a member of the supposed Scipionic Circle or of a Philhellenic cultural and political faction, one may reasonably assume that his esteem for Paullus and Scipio Aemilianus colored his account of Anicius' games.

Anicius' victory celebrations suffer from comparison to two separate victory celebrations of Aemilius Paullus in 167, a triumph at Rome and games at Amphipolis. Livy (45.43.1–3) compares the triumphs to Anicius' detriment:

> With the memory of Paullus' Macedonian triumph still lingering not only in their minds, but almost before their eyes, Lucius Anicius celebrated a triumph over King Gentius and the Illyrians on the Quirinalia. Everything seemed similar but hardly on par with Paullus': the *imperator* himself was lesser, as Anicius was compared with Aemilius both in noble family and in office (a praetor versus a consul); Gentius could not be compared with Perseus, nor the Illyrians with the Macedonians, nor spoils with spoils, nor cash distributions with cash distributions, nor gifts with gifts. Accordingly, just as Paullus' recent triumph outshone this one, so this one appeared to those examining it on its own merits not at all contemptible.

We do not know whether Livy found an explicit comparison in his source (he names Valerius Antias at 45.43.8) or simply articulated what was implicit but obvious. As for games, in an insightful interpretation Edmondson (1999) argues that the elaborate spectacles staged within eighteen months of each other by Paullus at Amphipolis, Anicius at Rome, and Antiochus near Antioch engaged in conscious competition, each leader hoping to outdo his predecessor. Paullus set a high standard, and Edmondson concludes that Anicius' games were a fiasco because the vulgar Roman crowd, whose influence controlled events, humiliated both the famous Greek performers and Anicius himself. For Edmondson, Anicius' "attempted innovations … backfired" (88). But Polybius' account clearly states that the crowd loved it. The newly arrived Greek aristocrat, who had no familiarity with popular Roman spectacles and thus could not measure the success of the performance nor grasp its goals, probably assumed that Anicius aimed to copy Paullus'

[8] See especially 4.20–21, a digression on the civilizing influence of music and dance upon the Arcadians.

Greek-style entertainments and failed miserably. More likely Anicius aimed to produce Roman-style entertainments and succeeded.[9] Anicius would have been foolish to vie with Paullus on Paullus' terms. Livy identifies the inherent and insurmountable political disparities. As for aesthetics, offering a purely Greek show for Romans in competition with a purely Greek show in distant Amphipolis seems misguided.[10]

Anicius had good reason to distance himself from Paullus, whose triumph in Rome was not an unqualified success. Tragedy undercut that celebration. Plutarch's reconstruction of Paullus' triumph claims that the pitiful spectacle of Perseus' children moved the Roman crowd to tears and diluted their pleasure with pain (*Aemilius* 33.4). Perseus' royal costume (34.1) added a visual emblem of tragic theater. Moreover, the death of Paullus' two sons five days before and three days after the triumph led to the observation that the triumphant general was the real victim, the vanquished Perseus the real conqueror (36.6). Beard (2007) 137 observes that Paullus' parading of the conquered royal family threatened "to subvert the hierarchy of victor and victim" to the extent that the pathetic victims stole the spotlight. Anicius, about to present another captive royal family in triumph only three months later, would take no such risk: to avoid echoes of a Greek tragedy, his games offered a Roman farce. To Polybius' consternation, Anicius' show in the Circus Maximus culminated (or cratered) with the derision of tragic performers. Anicius, far from letting events spin out of control to his disgrace, introduced and ridiculed the tragic genre to serve an end consonant with what preceded. Bringing tragic players onstage only to mock them defined the generic frame of Anicius' show as farce or parody. His production raised the specter of tragedy only to banish it. As a reaction to Paullus' misfortune, Anicius' choice is downright apotropaic.[11] Given the difficulty of rivaling Paullus' grandeur and given the tragic aura of his triumph, we should not uncritically accept Edmondson's proposition that "it seems very unlikely that Anicius would have wanted his triumphal celebration to be remembered as an utter farce"

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9 Goldberg (1995) 39: "[i]t was certainly not a Greek show, which is why it offended Polybius, who came to it with inappropriate expectations. It was a Roman show fashioned from Greek elements, and that is the key to its significance."

10 Günther (2002) 125, apparently unaware of Edmondson's study, dismisses comparison with the games at Amphipolis.

11 O'Neill (2003) argues that Plautus' tragicomic *Amphitruo* is essentially apotropaic and, like the scurrilous verses in the triumphal parade, partially serves to avert divine wrath from the *triumphator*. Polybius' refusal to describe the performance of the tragic actors is particularly frustrating, for we cannot know if anything therein spoofed Pacuvius' *Paullus*, likely staged subsequent to Paullus' triumph.

((1999) 84). What if his goal was to respond to Paullus by rendering a farcical, even Plautine, barbarization of Greek culture?[12]

If tragedy framed Paullus' triumph, comedy shaped Anicius'. Livy (45.43.8) pointedly records that Anicius' soldiers were especially jocular and celebrated their commander with an abundance of scurrilous triumphal verses (*laetior hunc triumphum est secutus miles, multisque dux ipse carminibus celebratus*). more significantly, Anicius may have exploited the Roman calendar by presenting his games on the Quirinalia, producing a ludic celebration appropriate to the Feast of Fools. Livy records that Anicius' triumph fell on the Quirinalia, a festival for Quirinus. But that same date is also the Feast of Fools (*stultorum feriae*) based upon its association with the Fornacalia, a festival in honor of Fornax, the goddess of ovens. The yoking of the two festivals is explicit in Festus and Plutarch,[13] and Ovid mischievously links them to jab at those who accept the traditional deification of Romulus.[14] Athenaeus does not make clear whether Anicius' victory games were part of his triumph, and Livy's report of the triumph makes no mention of *ludi*. But since Athenaeus does call the games *epinikioi*, which typically denotes *triumphales*, it remains possible that Anicius' games *did* fall upon the Feast of Fools.[15] Such a synchronicity insinuates that Anicius arranged a triumphal entertainment appropriate to the calendar: a feast of defeated Greeks acting like fools at the behest of the Roman *imperator*.

The staging of scenic entertainment thematically appropriate to the occasion finds suggestive parallels. Shakespeare offers the clearest and most illuminating one, for in 1594 *The Comedy of Errors* (based on Plautus' *Menaechmi*) premiered on December 28, Holy Innocents' Day, a Feast of Fools. The success of the play thereafter linked confusion and errors with Holy Innocents Day, as declared by the contemporary account of the *Gesta*

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12 Günther (2002) 127, focusing on textual analysis of Athenaeus and Polybius, rejects the interpretation of Anicius' *ludi* as parody. Her study does not, however, interpret the show in light of *ludi scaenici*.

13 Festus identifies the two festivals: *stultorum feriae appellabantur Quirinalia* (304L, 418 L). Plutarch's *Roman Question #89* ("Why do they call the Quirinalia the Feast of Fools?") suggests that the Fools were those who did not celebrate the Fornacalia with the rest of their Curia, perhaps because they did not know to which Curia they belonged.

14 Thus Robinson (2003 and 2011) on *Fasti* 2.475–532.

15 Walbank (1979) 446 concludes that "Anicius' games were probably the result of a *votum*, and quite distinct from his triumph"; contra Edmondson, who believes that they could have been part of the triumph ((1999) 92 n. 48, n. 49). Tacitus' (14.21) somewhat confusing discussion of theatrical spectacles mentions Mummius' triumph in 145 BCE, thus implying that a triumph could include spectacles on stage, if not actual plays.

Grayorum.[16] Shakespeare presented *The Comedy of Errors* again on Holy Innocents' Day at court for King James in 1604, a clear sign of the royal imprimatur for associating occasion and production. Other Elizabethan parallels can be adduced.[17] If English Renaissance comparanda seem to stray too far afield, we may consider that in 160 BCE Terence's *Adelphoe* was staged at the funeral games of Aemilius Paullus. Terence's comedy explores complications of adoption, fatherhood, profligacy, and honor in ways eerily appropriate for the deceased, who gave up two of his sons for adoption (Leigh (2004) 158–191). Perhaps more tongue-in-cheek, Terence's *Eunuchus* gains added zest from allusion to its performance at the *ludi Megalenses*, the festival of the *Magna Mater*, whose devotees infamously castrated themselves. Since contemporary *ludi scaenici* such as the *praetextae* could exploit thematic links to their contexts, we can speculate that Anicius' ludic show had something to do with Quirinus.[18]

A triumph on a Feast of Fools and Quirinalia might authorize a singularly rich opportunity to highlight the interwoven themes of apotheosis, impersonation, tomfoolery, and inversion already present in any triumphal celebration. Since a general had "a fair amount of discretion in scheduling his celebration," he could choose a significant date (Brennan (1996) 322). Quirinalia was a popular choice—the Fasti record four triumphs on it before Anicius'—perhaps to associate the general with Romulus, celebrator of Rome's first triumph. Triumphs were essentially massive public theater during which, among other things, the glorified *imperator* appeared at once human and divine. In some acts of the triumphal ritual, the *imperator* effectively impersonated a god.[19] By celebrating a triumph on Quirinalia, a festival recalling the assimilation of mortal Romulus to immortal Quirinus, Anicius deepened the conflation of human and divine identities. Debasement accompanied the *imperator's*

16 "[A]nd after such Sports, a *Comedy of Errors* (like to Plautus his *Menechmus*) was played by the Players. So that Night was begun, and continued to the end, in nothing but Confusion and Errors; whereupon, it was ever afterwards called, The Night of Errors." Kinney (1988) elucidates the connections between the play's themes and its occasion.

17 Although Hassel (1979) overstates the correspondences of plays and the liturgical calendar, some plays clearly were chosen for staging on relevant feast days.

18 Zorzetti (1980) argues for the Republican *praetextae* as timely celebrations of *imperium*; Flower (1995) suggests votive games rather than triumphs as their context. Wiseman (1998) probes connections among drama, history, and occasion.

19 Versnel (1970) 56–93 and Beard (2007) 219–256 investigate the ambiguous and liminal state of the general during his triumph. Beard's rigorous criticism of individual elements recalling divinity (the *imperator*'s costume and painted face, the route to the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, the slave reminding him of mortality, etc.) does not destroy the core idea that the general was superhuman for that day.

exalted status, for scurrility pervaded the triumph, most notably in the ribald verses mocking the conqueror. Such debasement carries a whiff of jocular social inversion, of Saturnalia. Indeed, M. Fulvius Nobilior's choice to celebrate both his ovation in 191 BCE and his triumph in 186 during Saturnalia documents a readiness to exploit the thematic overlap of the two rituals. Similarly, Plautus' *Amphitruo* provides a nearly contemporary Roman meditation on the ambiguities and lampoonery of the triumph. The play abounds with triumphal imagery and clearly portrays Amphitryon as a triumphant *imperator* returning home. In a remarkable set of Saturnalian inversions, Plautus shows us a lowly actor portraying almighty Jupiter, who impersonates a triumphant general to make carnal conquest of the general's wife.[20] This play's unusual mythological theme, with a cast of gods and royalty surrounding the birth of Hercules, portends something far more elevated than typical Plautine fare. However, ridiculous farce subverts the potentially serious or tragic elements of the story. The result perforates generic boundaries to create, in Mercury's words, a *tragicomoedia* (59, 63), a genre befitting both the story of the birth of demigod Hercules and the ambiguities of a Roman triumph.[21]

Even if we sever a connection between Anicius' games and his triumph on the Quirinalia, the ludic context of votive games still suggests that the show's progress was scripted rather than improvised. To Edmondson (1999) 84, the spectators became dissatisfied with the sophisticated, sedate Greek style entertainment, and as they made their displeasure known, Anicius bent to their will. But Polybius' account credits Anicius with the initiative and nowhere alludes to the audience's dissatisfaction. Deviation from the norms of Greek performance did not begin with the intervention of the lictor in the middle of the first act; rather, pre-show configurations suggest that the *imperator* directed events from their inception. The huge size of the stage merited mention, and perhaps it was designed to accommodate an extraordinary number of artists performing simultaneous shenanigans. The presence of trumpeters and buglers waiting in the wings—Roman

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20 Beard (2007) 253–256; cf. O'Neill (2003) 20: "the play is, in some sense, functioning as an extended triumph song." We do not know if *Amphitruo* was staged as part of a triumphal celebration or votive games, though O'Neill (18–20) connects it with M. Fulvius Nobilior. Richlin (1992) 10 links the spirit of obscenity and inversion in the scenic *ludi Florales*, triumphs, and Saturnalia.

21 Aspects of Saturnalia and mythological travesty in *Amphitruo* could remind us of satyr drama (O'Neill (2003) 20). Rehm (2007) 195 provocatively connects satyr plays and the *palliata's* Saturnalian spirit: "Rather than satyrs, the Romans used the image of the *Greeks* when putting their 'reversed world' on stage."

military instruments probably played by Romans—signals a planned and incongruous Roman element amidst the Greek entertainment. Gruen (1992) 217 and Goldberg (1995) 39 both observe that performers wait "on cue." "Cue" could be taken literally, for in Athenaeus' account the lictor behaves as Anicius' assistant stage manager. Polybius twice stresses that the four *auletai* begin playing in unison, for these were normally soloists, not ensemble players. The subsequent behavior of the subdivided chorus perhaps explains this plurality, for each instrumentalist could direct a different choral unit.[22] The chorus executes complex military maneuvers—wheeling in unison, attacking, retreating—recognizable to the trained military eye of Polybius. Perhaps Anicius' show incurred Polybius' disapproval because it parodied the very sort of serious Greek military dances accompanied by the aulos that Polybius praises at 4.20.[23] The ability of the performers to move in discrete units reminiscent of maniples implies rehearsal rather than chaotic improvisation.

A general's micromanagement of *ludi* was, in fact, a topic of current conversation. According to Livy, Paullus himself equated an *imperator* with an impresario: "they used to repeat widely a saying of his that the same person who knows how to conquer in war also knows how to organize a banquet and to prepare *ludi*" (45.32.11). The report apparently originated in Polybius (30.14; cf. Plutarch, *Aemilius* 28.5). We do not know whether Paullus said this in praise of his own games at Amphipolis, in condemnation of Anicius' farce, or with reference to both, but the statement documents the equation of *imperator* and impresario. Paullus did not coin that equation, which is implicit in the urban praetor's duties as both a commander with *imperium* and an organizer of the Ludi Apollinares, for the idea existed in the Roman theater.[24] Plautus' *Poenulus* opens with a command for silence from the prologue speaker who jokingly dubs himself the *imperator histricus* (4, 44). He issues edicts to the audience, including lictors and officials in charge of the *ludi* (16–44). The metaphor works because both *imperator* and impresario collect, instruct, station, and direct their troops.

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22 Edmondson's (1999) 83 plausible suggestion that four players were needed to amplify the sound for the large venue accounts for their initial deployment but not their subsequent performance as separate, competing entities.

23 On Polybius and such dances, see Ceccarelli (1998) 17, 222. Alternatively, Goldberg (1995) 39 suggests that the performers' movement in lines recalls Roman dancing practice.

24 The power of general as impresario underlies the work of director Bryan Doerries' "The Theater of War," which explores the plays of Sophocles (*strategos* and tragedian) as rituals of communal therapy for his audience of veterans.

The impresario stands outside the world of the play; he is not a character. Yet within the world of the play, or at least in Plautus' plays, we find his persona in the clever slave. The clever slave—a star part likely played by the impresario himself—self-consciously and metatheatrically appropriates the roles of both impresario and *imperator*. These are, perhaps, the two most pervasive analogies for the Plautine *servus callidus*. As impresario, he is at times the playwright, director, or manager scripting the action and directing the movements of his troop of helpers (N.W. Slater (1985) 12–13). Characters frequently describe the progress of his scripted or improvised deceptions with military terminology appropriate to the *imperator*. His attempts to bamboozle an opponent, be it father, pimp, or *miles gloriosus*, become an assault, a siege, an epic battle.[25] Most famously, Chrysalus' lyrical song in *Bacchides* likens his machinations to a second storming of Troy (925–978). He casts his victory as a Roman triumph (971) but disdains celebrating one as too common (1068–1075). Plautus need not refer in any play to a particular triumph or set of triumphs because Roman concerns about triumphs and booty are perennial and pervasive.[26]

The clever slave's successful appropriation of military terminology and tactics gains poignancy by juxtaposition to the figure whose military training fails him: the *miles gloriosus*. Plautus frequently links the two stock characters in comic symbiosis.[27] *Miles Gloriosus*, in which the crafty slave Palaestrio outwits the braggart Pyrgopolynices, best exemplifies the technique. The braggart soldier's conquests resonate with contemporary Roman overseas expansion, and comical lists of defeated opponents (e.g. *Curculio* 442–448) no doubt struck a chord in an era of contested triumphal celebrations over exotic tribes and kingdoms, when a speaker such as Cato could accuse a commander of defeating phantom opponents to secure a triumph.[28] Anicius faced a difficult challenge in legitimating his triumphal celebration, for it was the third within a three-month span, following those of Paullus and Octavius. Moreover, his victory was so quick that, as Livy observed (44.32.5),

[25] Fraenkel (2007) 159–165 gives the essentials, which appear to hold true for other authors of the *palliata* but not for Greek New Comedy. MacCary (1968) gives fuller lists of military images.

[26] Gruen (1990) 129–140. Fontaine (2010) 126 encapsulates the ambiguity of the clever slave's triumphal allusions: are the jokes historical or metatheatrical?

[27] Hanson (1965) 66 notes that of the nine plays with a *miles gloriosus* all but one feature a *servus* (or in *Curculio*, a *parasitus*) *callidus*. *Truculentus* offers instead a *meretrix callida*.

[28] Cato: *de falsis pugnis* (190 BCE); Hanson (1965) 61; Goldberg (2007) 133: "Almost every prominent Roman of the day was a potential *gloriosus*." Paullus' claim to a triumph met opposition due to political wrangling rather than a lack of merit.

"uniquely, this war was completed before it was announced at Rome that it was commenced." This sounds potentially like a sham triumph. In essence, Anicius avoided identification with a *miles gloriosus*, the agelast boasting of inflated exploits, by presenting a show that implicitly assimilated him to a *servus callidus*, the comic hero.

Triumphs, votive games, and theatrical performances of the middle republic manifest a competitive spirit, as the goal of such spectacles is not simply to imitate, but to outdo (Flower 2004; Edmondson 1999; Bell (2004) 138–150). If Anicius, ex-praetor of an undistinguished family, could have little hope of surpassing the lavish spectacles of the noble, Philhellenic, ex-consul Paullus, he still could do to Paullus what Plautus and his peers did to their Greek models. The goal of Plautine-style *palliata* is not to replicate the style and substance of Greek New Comedy but to twist it to serve Roman tastes. Plautus himself describes his process of adaptation: *Plautus vortit barbare*, Plautus barbarizes it (*Trinummus* 19). He does not simply translate his originals into Latin, he perverts them; the transformation is not *Latine* but *barbare*, barbarous. The derogatory cultural implications of *barbare* become a badge of honor celebrating the destruction of the naturalism and orderly presentation of Greek originals. We now possess enough of Menander to identify with confidence the pervasive dramaturgic changes rung by Plautus and his peers. They excise choral interludes to present plays with continuous action rather than measured progress over five acts. They change meters and introduce polymetric song to make their productions more operatic and less naturalistic. Their plots privilege the farcical and indeterminate over the naturalistic and conclusive. Characterization becomes caricature, as derived from stock types of the Atellan farces. Metatheatrical references call attention to and spoof the dramatic conventions inherited from the Greeks. Plautus sums up the competitive relationship between Roman adaptors and Greek originators in *Mostellaria* 1149–1151: *si amicus Diphilo aut Philemoni es dicito eis, quo pacto tuos te servos ludificaverit; optumas frustrationes dederis in comoediis* ("If you're a friend of Diphilus or Philemon, tell them how your slave de-luded you. You've supplied the best deception scenes in comedies"). Roman New Comedy combats the "Anxiety of Influence" by thumbing its nose at its Greek cultural paternity. Greek modes do not provide standards for emulation but raw material for Roman fun because the goal is not imitation and competition for a Greek audience, but triumphing through subversion and reconfiguration for a Roman audience.

Highbrow critics who see the goal of the *palliata* as imitation rather than subversion have sometimes misunderstood the process of Plautine adaptation. In the twentieth century, the most notorious example is Norwood,

who assails Plautus as "the worst of all writers who have ever won permanent repute," claiming that he "wrote plays like a blacksmith mending a watch" ((1932) 4, 1). Norwood, imprisoned by a viewpoint that esteems naturalism in dramatic art, could not see that Plautine comedy self-consciously draws attention to its theatrical heritage and thereby ridicules conventions. Norwood has ancient ancestors. Aulus Gellius, comparing passages of Menander with his Roman adaptor Caecilius Statius (3.23), judges the Roman playwright grossly inferior. Gellius condemns Caecilius for sloppiness and proffering "mangled bits of Menander stitched together with the language of tragic bombast." While Menander appears "brilliant and appropriate and witty … simple and naturalistic and delightful," Caecilius chooses to "play the fool," ignoring naturalism in characterization to "drag in god-knows-what kind of farcical stuff." Such complaints about farce, tragic bombast, slapstick, and generic violations sound familiar: the negative evaluations of Norwood and Gellius about Plautus and Caecilius echo Polybius' criticism of Anicius' show. The highbrow judgments of Greeks and Hellenophiles favor "purer" Hellenic originals over the salty Roman adaptations that mock them.

As we understand and adjust for the perspectives of Norwood and Gellius, so, too, we must understand and adjust for Polybius' particular gaze. Perhaps the most unpalatable aspect of Anicius' games for Polybius is the gleeful destruction of established temporal, generic, and spatial boundaries. Obviously, the performances of dancers and boxers and buglers should be separate and sequential rather than mixed. Dancers should not duke it out with musicians nor occupy the stage alongside prizefighters. Anicius' show dissolves boundaries of the performance space in a way that recalls (or derives from) Italian rather than Greek New Comedy. Permanent Hellenistic Greek theaters clearly divide the stage for actors, orchestra for choruses, and seating for spectators. The chorus in Greek New Comedy serves a dual function of establishing boundaries both within the play and the theater: their four dances demarcate five distinct acts and their occupation of the orchestra separates actors on stage from spectators in seats (N.W. Slater (1987) 4–5). Roman New Comedy eliminates the chorus, interludes, five-act structure, and orchestral space. When Anicius' dancers sally forth from the orchestra to storm the stage occupied by aulos-players, we behold a simulacrum of how the *palliata* reconfigures performance space by evacuating the orchestra. The immediate proximity of actors and spectators in the cramped temporary playing spaces of the *palliata* allows actors—especially in Plautus—direct engagement with the spectators verbally and probably physically throughout the plays (Goldberg 1998; Moore 1998; N.W. Slater (1987) 6–8). Likewise, the intrusion of Anicius' lictor, a Roman authority figure foreign to the Greek milieu of the

performance, recalls the intrusion of the *Choragus* into the middle of *Curculio*. The *Choragus* stops the play and collapses spatial and temporal boundaries by giving the audience a tour of the Roman Forum utterly incongruent with the fictive world of Epidaurus. Such blurring or abolition of the theater's spatial boundaries among performers, musicians, and audience appealed to the Roman aesthetic. Jory (1986) 149 draws attention to a much later anecdote in Lucian (*De saltatione* 83–84), wherein a pantomime portraying Ajax gone mad dashed across the stage, took the flute from an accompanist, and smashed Odysseus over the head. Lucian reports that: "The whole theater went mad with Ajax, leaping and shouting and flinging up their garments, for the riff-raff and the totally ignorant took no thought for propriety and, unable to distinguish what was good from what was bad, thought that this sort of display was the pinnacle of mimicry of the emotion of madness." Lucian's assessment blames ignorance for the audience's approval. But more likely that approval comes from the audience's endorsement of ignoring or transcending familiar boundaries, of going "all-in" contrary to conventions of mimesis. Romans exhibit a preference for exuberant, frame-breaking spontaneity over precise execution of scripted performance.[29]

Spontaneity can, of course, be an illusion. Plautus is a master of scripted spectacle masquerading as improvised chaos.[30] While the actors work from scripts rather than improvise, the characters they portray, especially the clever slaves, appear to be making it up as they go. This brings us back to Anicius' lictor. Polybius, not an experienced spectator of Roman entertainments, claims that the performers were puzzled by the lictor and then dismisses their rowdy response with a slap at their stereotyped moral laxity. He assumes that the lictor's intervention was spontaneous rather than prearranged, and that the apparent confusion of the performers was itself not part of the show scripted by the *imperator*. Such an assumption fails to grasp the distinction between truly improvised programs and rehearsed programs that replicate improvisation.

The concluding scenes of seemingly spontaneous festive dancing in Menander and Plautus help elucidate the Plautine aesthetics of Anicius'

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29 Perhaps Massinger's *The Roman Actor* (1626) best grasps and interprets the Roman fascination with shredding the boundaries of mimesis. Anicius' show violently and metatheatrically breaks the walls of genre and decorum not unlike the conclusion of Mel Brooks' "Blazing Saddles" (1974), where the cowboys burst through a studio wall and begin punching members of a dance chorus.

30 Barsby (1995) 70: "Though *Pseudolus* itself is not an improvised play, it is specifically written so that it shall appear to be." Cf. Marshall (2006) 245–279; N.W. Slater (1985).

show. Menander's *Dyskolos* closes with two slaves browbeating the misanthrope Knemon into joining them in a dance as a wedding occurs offstage. Although one may focus on the scene's cruelty in torturing the injured Knemon, the episode also fulfills a socializing function, for the physical linking of bodies serves to rehabilitate the curmudgeon and integrate him into his new family connections. Quite likely, the dance represents a group or chain dance of the sort performed by women at a wedding (O'Bryhim, 2001). While a laughable element of transgressive sexuality underlies the slaves' jests (892, 945) and the sight of three men performing the dance of women, the scene is not gratuitously cinaedic. Now that Knemon's misanthropy has been defeated, the scene celebrates a new social cohesion enacted through the performance of structured dance steps. In contrast, Plautine scripts direct their performers to commence what appears to be abandonment of a coherent script in favor of impromptu revelry. The conclusion of Plautus' *Stichus*, a play based on a script of Menander, demonstrates how *Plautus vortit barbare*. To celebrate a happy homecoming and reunion of married couples, Stichus declares they should behave like Athenians (670), a Plautine code for Greeking-it-up with a party.[31] Stichus and Sangarinus interrupt their heavy drinking to invite the piper to imbibe (754–765), thereby dissolving the boundary between the stage and the wings, as well as the worlds of the play and the theater.[32] When the sated piper resumes playing, the slaves commence competitive Ionian and cinaedic dancing (*qui Ionicus aut cinaedicust, qui hoc tale facere possiet?* 769). The revelry is an end in itself without thematic ties to the earlier action; plot and characterization yield to seemingly improvised and unbridled physical display. This party almost certainly was not the conclusion to the Menandrean original (Lowe (1995) 28–29). The scene is thoroughly Plautine, as indicated by its similarity to the conclusions of *Pseudolus* and *Persa*. In *Persa*, Toxilus declares a formal triumph in Roman military language (753–757) and celebrates with Paegnium and Sagaristio through a mixture of competitive cinaedic dancing and punching the pimp (Benz 2001). Such cinaedic dancing "served in Plautus to represent the epitome of the Saturnalian: the removal of everyday mores that

[31] Cf. *pergraecari* (*Mostellaria* 64, *Poenulus* 603) and *congraecare* (*Bacchides* 743).

[32] The command for the piper to stop playing in *Dyskolos* differs significantly because it does not break the frame, for the party at Pan's shrine effectively excuses and incorporates Menander's piper into the naturalistic realm of the play (Gomme and Sandbach (1973) 266–267). The effect is akin to music in a film coming from a jukebox onscreen rather than an overdubbed soundtrack.

lay at the heart of Roman comedy."[33] In Menander, controlled dancing replicates and reinforces society's bonds; in Plautus, freeform dancing dissolves social constraints.

Festive scenes reveal other ways in which Roman adaptation can blur, ignore, or destroy inherited theatrical conventions of Greek New Comedy. For example, the dancing in Menander's *Dyskolos* transpires outside a cave and mirrors the revelry inside; the *mise en scène* thus maintains a coherent and naturalistic separation between interior and exterior spaces. When Plautus chooses to stage the symposiastic scenes of *Stichus*, *Persa, Mostellaria*, and *Asinaria* outside on the street, he places before our eyes what properly belongs inside and out of sight. Spatial boundaries and the associated decorum are ignored.[34] So, too, are limits on participants. Plautine fiestas are more boisterous than their Greek models in part because they fill the stage with four or five concurrent speakers, plus mute extras, to exceed the Greek rule of three speaking actors (see Marshall, this volume). The festive Roman spirit culminates with something approaching a curtain call, as nine of the extant nineteen final scenes in Plautus require a minimum of four concurrent speakers (Franko (2004) 30–33).

Plautus represents the *palliata*'s normative mode of Romanizing Greek dramatic scripts. But it was not the only possible way. Within a year of Anicius' games, Terence premiered his *Andria* and his version of the *palliata*, and in so doing he challenged the genre's norms. Although Terence works within the *palliata*'s established traditions of formulaic plots and stock characters, he clearly attempts to reorient the aesthetic priorities of the genre. His characters reveal a complexity that nods towards naturalism and away from caricature, and he portrays no successful clever slaves like Pseudolus or Chrysalus celebrating triumphs. While Terence does not move towards "the fourth wall," he does minimize non-illusory, metatheatrical references. Terentian action seems less frenetic, more sedate ("*stataria*" as *Heauton Timoroumenos* 35–36 dubs it). Although Terence frequently uses musically-accompanied iambic and trochaic verse, the exotic polymetric cantica that typify Plautus

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33 Moore (2012) 110; cf. Habinek (2005) 177–193. Given that the lewdness of Ionian dancing included hiking up one's clothes to expose oneself (Lawler (1943) 67–68; *Pseudolus* 1274–1278), we might wonder about Anicius' dancer lifting his robe to box the aulos-player. Did the crowd cheer merely his pugilistic stance or that he also flashed his genitalia at the piper?

34 Lowe (1995) 31: "Actors unencumbered by a permanent *skēnē* would find it much easier to stage indoor scenes than dramatists writing for the Theatre of Dionysus in Athens in the fourth and third centuries BC … it is likely that on an improvised stage the distinction between 'inside' and 'outside' would at least be blurred."

are conspicuously absent. There is no cinaedic dancing in Terence. Above all, Terence's language stands outside the genre's norms as he approximates a smooth Menandrean diction.[35] When Terence condemns a rival for *bene vortendo et scribendo male* (adapting well but writing badly; *Eunuchus* 7), he declares the established process of *vortere* insufficient for his aesthetic goals. One must *vortere bene* (not *barbare*) AND *scribere bene*, script it well, which may include pruning back the open-ended, improvisatory branches of the performance.

Terence's innovations have drawn criticism. "*Non est placita*" declares the production notice for the first two aborted performances of *Hecyra*, and some have held that the play's struggles indicate a Roman distaste for Terence's aesthetic.[36] All of Terence's prologues attempt to define and laud Terentian poetics, but *Hecyra* merits special attention because it appears to allude to Anicius' games in a kind of intertextual (interspectacular?) one-upmanship. The extant prologue from the *ludi Romani* of 160 declares that performance of the play was aborted in 165 at the Ludi Megalenses, when anticipation of a tightrope walker and boxers created a ruckus, and again in 160 at the funeral games for Aemilius Paullus, when a rumor of gladiators caused a mob to burst in and displace Terence's audience.[37] That a play to honor Paullus—the man who bragged of organizing a show well—should suffer violent disruption presents an odd irony; both Goldberg (1995) 40–43 and Gruen (1992) 210–215 have indicated the difficulties of accepting at face value the prologue's self-serving account. Whatever really prevented completion of the play's first two performances, we must wonder why Terence chose to dredge up the past as he did. Although he needed to excuse the staging of a play previously offered, the disparaging mention of boxers, ropewalkers, and gladiators as the preference of a *populus stupidus* seems to mock Anician-style entertainment. Perhaps not coincidentally, Anicius was consul in 160. Terence promises to minimize the slapstick, farcical, and chaotic to offer an alternative and competitor to the cruder physical displays that the consul might prefer.

Athenaeus classifies Anicius among jokesters (γελωτοποιοί), and the story inspires laughter among his learned Greek banqueters. But their laughter is likely quite different from that of the show's original audience. What

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[35] Wright (1974) remains fundamental for establishing the genre's normative style and Terence's renovations. Karakasis' (2005) linguistic analysis confirms and refines Wright's broader generalizations.

[36] Typical is Segal (2001) 242–246.

[37] Gilula (1981), Sandbach (1982), and Parker (1996) lay to rest the misconception that Terence's audiences left the performances out of dissatisfaction.

about the performance made those Romans laugh, and what might that laughter reveal? Since we have no comprehensive and insightful scholarly treatment of Roman laughter akin to Halliwell's (2008) *Greek Laughter*, we must fall back to the general, ahistorical theories for the nature of laughter advanced by philosophers and psychologists.[38] Two of the theories that best illuminate the positive reception of Anicius' spectacle are incongruity and superiority. The incongruity theory, focusing upon cognitive response, sees laughter as a reaction to an incongruity between a viewer's (or listener's) preconceptions and real objects (Morreall (1987) 6, 54–55). Dancers are not supposed to box, and prizefighters are not supposed to share the stage with musicians. Anicius' games foil expectations and thereby elicit laughter. Interpretation through the incongruity theory entails that the Roman audience understood the norms of the genre and performance, and their clapping, rather than hissing and hooting, signals their approval of the transgression. Put another way, the Roman spectators knew the difference between a concert and a prizefight, and the incongruous conflation amused them.

The superiority theory perhaps offers us greater insight into the audience's approval of Anicius' games. A spectator's sense of superiority has been identified as a prime motivator for laughter since Plato and Aristotle, with perhaps the theory's most famous expression given by Thomas Hobbes: "Laughter is nothing else but sudden glory arising from some sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly" (*apud* Morreall (1987) 20). An audience's sense of superiority provides a social frame conducive to derisive laughter. Clearly Anicius' games catered to this sense of superiority because the crowd was celebrating a Roman triumph over inferior Greeklings.[39] The finest performers in Greece, at the command of the *imperator*, engaged in degrading behavior. Indubitably a similar show by Roman performers would also have produced laughter and applause; however, the chauvinistic and xenophobic elements amplified the positive reception. Anicius produced a kind of ethnic humor, not unlike Plautine quips that silly characters are "Greeking it up" (*pergraecari, congraecare*). Anicius' show, like Plautus', reads almost as an

[38] Lowe (2008) 1–17 offers a brief useful survey of approaches and their application to ancient comedy; primary sources in Morreall (1987). Segal (1987) remains fundamental on the Saturnalian, carnivalesque nature of Plautine comedy.

[39] Cf. Gruen (1992) 218: "By turning it into a fiasco and inviting a Roman audience to egg on the entertainers in activities that discredited their talents, he braced the spectators' sense of their own cultural superiority."

exemplar of Eco's observation on carnival ((1984) 2): "Comic is always racist: only the others, the Barbarians, are supposed to pay" and invites us to ask: who's acting *barbare* now?

OTIUM, *OPULENTIA* AND *OPSIS*: SETTING, PERFORMANCE AND PERCEPTION WITHIN THE *MISE-EN-SCÈNE* OF THE ROMAN HOUSE

Richard Beacham

> Here the hard business of life was theatre;
> the owners of the house played the lead.[1]

By the period of the late Republic / early Principate, the typical Pompeian town house was divided into two distinct and, to a significant extent, functionally separate realms. The first consisted of the entrance areas (*fauces* and/or *vestibulum*), leading on to the *atrium*, *tablinum* and adjacent rooms. Often the *tablinum* itself was framed by two smaller recessive flanking areas, which Vitruvius designates as the *alae*.[2] Structurally set apart from this ensemble was a second area to the rear of the house with rooms opening off of one or more peristyles. Within these two primary areas, further spatial distinctions were possible. A defining feature of each area was the formalised disposition of "public" and "private" spaces around a large central space in a manner that reflected and conditioned the social rituals that occurred within them, while allowing a significant degree of flexibility in the social use of the house.

The demarcation between sections associated with the *atrium* and those with the peristyle became a symbolic threshold, a place of transition, between public and private, non-privileged and privileged, Roman and foreign: "the introduction of the peristyle alongside the traditional *atrium* allows a constant play between the traditional and the exotic that acts as a powerful tool for social differentiation and control" (Wallace-Hadrill (1997) 240).

Through the design, décor and disposition of space in their houses, elite Romans not only could signal their active participation in attaining the

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[1] Beard and Henderson (2001) 18.

[2] Vitruvius (6.3.3–6) suggests in detail the dimensions and relative proportions for the *atrium, alae and tablinum*. Although Pompeii provides most of our evidence, this seems broadly applicable to generic Roman practice.

refinements and cultural benefits offered by Hellenic example; they also gave visible and tangible expression to their status within the highly competitive world of Roman upper-class society. Vitruvius (6.5.1–5) describes the architectural features as an index to the social status of the owner. Thus, for those of modest rank, only basic domestic elements were appropriate; others, such as bankers, should command something a bit larger and ostentatious (*speciosiora*), while lawyers and orators required more elegant and spacious accommodation for the reception of audiences. At the apex of the social/architectural hierarchy, the houses of the most important and respected owners evoked the grandeur of public architecture (*magnificentia operum publicorum*), of which theatres were amongst the grandest and most public. By imitating the architecture and décor of grandiose and impressive theatres, basilicas, libraries, and picture galleries, and encoding these symbolically into their imposing vestibules, *atria* and peristyles, elite Romans displayed wealth, luxury and the *dignitas* appropriate to their station in society.

But the ultimate effect of incorporating such elements into the domestic environment was not merely to symbolise visually through static signs the householder's public persona and status. They communicated deeper and more subtler messages as well. "We cannot distinguish between the architectural and visual world of the Roman educated elite on the one hand, and their mental and rhetorical world on the other".[3] In providing virtual stage settings derived from public analogues, houses and décor enabled the owners to engage in flattering fictions and encourage guests and visitors to become willing and complicit spectators within a discourse of theatricalism, observing patrons within these derivative and allusive spaces, and perceiving

[3] Elsner (1995) 77. Elsner discusses in this context the ancient practice of mnemonics. Within the field of rhetorical training Roman orators and writers had developed a theory and technique for creating imagined spaces as an aid to memory. This involved conceiving an internal choreography within the mind's eye, through which the speaker visualised himself moving through an architectural environment, each section of which contained a symbolic, frequently spectacular or emotionally evocative, "prop", to trigger memory of the desired verbal sequence and argument within his speech. The images through which the speech (or other body of extensive information) was to be remembered were placed by the imagination within the particular locations of the notional building which the speaker had "installed" in his imagination. See Quintilian, *Inst. Orat.* 11.2.18–26; Cicero, *De Orat.*, 2.86, 2.351–360; *Rhetorica Ad Herennium*, 3.16–24. Elsner notes in connection with mnemonics, "if in the Roman house, the layout … served regularly as the means for ordering and memorising speeches, then equally the order and structure of these very houses … are the three-dimensional embodiment of the process of structuring thought … Romans *thought* by means of their houses—their visual and architectural environment."

them as they wished to present themselves. Domestic design and décor offered an extension of the "actual world"; an imaginative realm, a "possible world" inviting the viewer to move psychologically through an alternative mental landscape, while, at the same time, providing commentary and perspective upon everyday activities and concerns: the "reference" world.[4]

It was through the provision of such mixed-reality environments simultaneously employing and displaying elements associated with public life, while functioning as the particular domestic sphere of the individual owner, that wealthy or influential Romans played out in highly public venues their social and cultural roles. With the decline in the Principate of their ability to acquire and exercise genuine political power, the Roman elite seem progressively to have chosen instead to fashion and "perform" themselves through their choice of language, gesture, and the settings in which these were presented. A crucial factor enabling this presentation to take place was the inclination of patrons, architects, and painters to draw extensively upon a language of theatricalism and to deploy within the house configurations of space, properties, scenery and movement which were conditioned by a theatricalised mode of viewing, reacting, imagining, and performing.

Houses were one of the major "*media*" that defined the social position, moral qualities, and ideological superiority of their elite Roman owners while dynamically and performatively giving visible expression of these in public life. They provided the necessary *mise-en-scène* within which crucially important distinctions of social rank could be made visible, manipulated and enacted. They could be extraordinarily allusive and sophisticated in their employment of codes of décor, furniture, and architecture; their spaces retained the flexibility to be shifted and modified by their servile "stagehands" according to the needs of the occasion and the wishes of the inhabitants. Most overtly, a great variety of entertainments featured prominently at the theatrically inflected dinner parties[5] traditionally presented within them.

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4 See Linderski (1989) on Roman self-fashioning through housing and, in particular, gardens.

5 These and the entire range and context of theatrical expression and influence are the subject of Beacham and Denard, *Living Theatre: Roman Theatricalism in the Domestic Sphere* (Yale UP, in press).

The Mise-en-Scène *of the House*

Roman houses used illusionistic wall paintings, décor, and the configuration of the rooms in which these figured, to transform their bare architecture into dizzying arrays of fictional space and encourage visitors and inhabitants imaginatively to respond to the make-believe qualities of the ambience. Domestic viewers' reactions to the exuberant fictionalisation of the house was in turn influenced by their familiarity with the whole range of cultural forms and practices that had appropriated aspects of theatricalism, as well as with the theatre itself.

Domestic décor frequently—and particularly through painting—depicted explicitly theatrical elements, such as stage architecture, costumes, masks, scenery, and actors.[6] Even when these were shown in a less "accurate", more fanciful manner, such paintings set forth to the viewer the vision—the "possible world"—that an actual theatrical event precipitated in the mind's eye of the theatre-goer. This persistent evocation of the referents of theatrical performance was itself a performance of sorts within the all-pervasive theatricalism of Roman culture.

Valerius Maximus (5.4.ext. 1) noted the theatricalising power of images when combined with verbal exposition (of the type a domestic visitor was likely to have encountered on a "tour" of the house). In the case of a mythological picture (ubiquitous on Roman walls), "men's eyes are stunned and stare when they see the painted image of this deed, recreating by their astonishment at the spectacle before them the circumstances of that ancient event, believing that in those silent painted limbs they see living, breathing bodies. That must also be the effect on the mind when it is encouraged to think of things long past as if they were at hand by more powerful verbal images."[7] It seems likely that frequently visitors' primary previous visual and verbal experience of the mythic subject matter of the paintings was through its depiction and enactment in the theatre, and such spectators would draw upon a theatricalised understanding of the scene to animate and render it imaginatively more immediate.

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[6] Although beyond the scope of my topic here, I have written extensively on the depiction (often stylised) of Roman stage sets in fresco compositions, and have produced ancient drama upon stages (including a production at the Getty "Roman Villa" in Malibu, reconstituted from such evidence http://www.didaskalia.net/issues/vol2no3/beacham.html). See Beacham (1991) 69–85; 169–182; (1999) 28; and the full treatment in (forthcoming, Yale), *Living Theatre: Roman Theatricalism in the Domestic Sphere*. See too King's Visualisation Lab's major project: http://www.skenographia.cch.kcl.ac.uk/.

[7] Translations of classical authors are my own unless otherwise indicated.

Figure 1. Villa of Oplontis, Room 14. (Blazeby for King's Visualisation Lab)

A prevalent fictionalising, an inclination toward "playing" and encouraging visitors and inhabitants constantly to perceive and respond to the "as-if" qualities of the ambience, as well as a persistent mixing of realities within it, was incorporated in the very structures and décor of the house and the functions it encompassed. It also was embodied spatially and temporally in the manner in which visitors experienced these elements sequentially as they moved through different areas of the house.

The Front Portions of the House

To interpret the Roman house, or investigate the range of possible meanings that Roman viewers may have drawn from its combination of actual and fantastical spaces, we need more closely to understand this hybrid vernacular of "domestic theatricalism," together with its "syntax" of space, décor, space-function, actors and spectators, and to attempt, as far as possible, to translate it into our own critical language. What follows is an account which systematically compares what might be termed the spatial (but also experiential and

cognitive) “expressive elements” common to both domestic and theatrical architecture. It analyses and compares the layout and décor of the Roman house—in particular its evocation of the “real” and the “fictional”—and the dynamic process through which these were encountered and experienced, with the spatial organisation and scenic disposition of the theatre.

The Street

Along the streets of Pompeii and Herculaneum very grand houses stood side by side with humble dwellings and shops. Possibly ancient owners located sumptuous dwellings amidst less imposing structures precisely to render them notable by contrast with their surroundings. Although there was little external indication of the type of décor or display found within, the doors opening from the street (normally left open during the day), provided those passing or lingering outside, or about to enter the house, impressive glimpses of its interior, usually along an actual—or not infrequently a visually contrived—central axis.[8] In conjunction with the views beyond them, the doors thus created an effect like a theatrical “scene of disclosure”, deriving its expressive power from a sequence of withholding, partly revealing and then releasing its visual content to the visitor. In a few cases, most notably the house of Epidius Sabinus (9.1.20)[9] with its prominent podium running across the entire front façade of the house, the effect was enhanced by raising the doorway above the level of the street and sidewalk.

Roman theatre displayed a variety of scenic devices that could both conceal and then reveal scenery. However, and more fundamentally, the conditions that the visitor/spectators encountered, both in the theatre and in the Roman house, can be understood and compared by drawing upon the concept of “ecological space”.[10] This is an interpretation of visualisation as determined by our habitation, as embodied creatures, within a physical and stable environment. We do not generally perceive or locate ourselves either visually or psychologically within an unstructured, open, and infinitely

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8 See Franklin (1980) 92–94. On open doors, Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.83; Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 5; Flower (1996) 188. See Kellum (1999) on theatrical aspects of the Roman street.

9 I use the standard system for locating houses at Pompeii. The first number indicates the region; the second the *insula*; the third the actual building. There are comprehensive maps of Pompeii based on this system in Van der Poel (1984).

10 Developed by cognitive psychologist James Gibson. See Gibson (1979). For embodiment theory, see Johnson (1999).

Figure 2. House of Sabinus (9.1.20). Street with raised stage-like entrance into the house. (AAR, 11667)

continuous space. Instead, the persisting surfaces of the physical structures normally about us are the determining coordinates for visual reality; we see and understand "not with the eyes but with the eyes-in-the-head-on-the-body-resting-on-the-ground", and also perceive the world around us sequentially as a dynamic "optical array" composed of "surfaces, continuities, breaks, edges, obstacles and openings, representing potential routes for movement and barriers to get around" (Rehm (2002) 8). Mobility adds to space the element of time, as through movement we experience the dynamic disclosing of the setting ahead and the disappearance of what is left behind. To locate ourselves within spaces, we must take our bearings from the physical elements which serve as the coordinates defining and giving structure to the space, a portion of which we perceive ourselves to be in and occupying. In brief, we are spatially and temporally relational creatures.

However, that concrete world constituting the ecology of space is subject to imitation, perceptual distortion and misrepresentation. Within the house, such perceptual playfulness is extended to embrace not just issues of reality and fiction, but others relating to status, access, and social signification. "As soon as one puts the emphasis on viewing, one discovers that the art of

the Roman house highlights an ambivalence and ambiguity of 'inside' and 'outside' and 'public' and 'private' ";[11] these are elements which, obviously, were also at the heart of spectators' experience within the theatre itself. I discuss later how Roman domestic architecture (together with the frescoes created upon its walls, with their insistent emphasis upon *trompe l'oeil*) positions and manipulates suggestive (but often deceptive) vistas, successive planes of often framed and carefully fashioned views coordinated to give the (often false) visual impression of axial symmetry. The creation of vistas seen through real or painted apertures (*Durchblicke*) serves to destabilise and disrupt the elements from which we construct normal visual reality and in the process may theatricalise it.[12] Vision is not just a sensorial experience but also readily engenders acts of imagination within the mind's eye.

In both the theatre and the house, the visitor encounters dynamic moving pictures, as views and images unfold before him. To enter and move through either is to become engaged in a scenario of synthetically composed and coordinated spaces, images and associated ideas in constant yet purposeful flux. The experience can be powerful and exhilarating. The manner in which a sequence of visual images can be unfolded to produce an aesthetic and sensual reaction in the spectator—whose anticipation of the final tableau or visual revelation has conditioned his or her response—is one of the fundamental expressive elements of theatre. Our ecological experience of space, and the bodily awareness arising from it, provides its effective force.

The expressive power is not limited to the immediate sensation produced; the experience is one of aesthetic and psychological induction, preparing the spectator for the fictionalised realm or mixed reality that s/he is entering. This was a physically and visually produced sensation which, once inside the ancient auditorium, was immediately reinforced by the splendour of the architecture and its décor, including a wealth of decorative mimetic embellishments (statues, friezes, masks, scenic panels painted in *trompe l'oeil*, depictions of mythological scenes and the like), which evoked legends and history. Behind the stage façade, awaited all the elements of fantasy and fiction which sequentially would pass through its doors, and onto the stage, having taken on form and meaning in the process, to enter into the consciousness and imagination of the spectators.

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[11] Elsner (1995) 66–67. Elsner discusses (op. cit. 61; 66–67), the nature of "inside" and "outside" in the configuration of the Roman house, and the depictions of architectural space upon its walls.

[12] Bek (1980) 180, describes the symmetrical framing of views as "a succession of planes lying behind each other across the axis of vision".

The analogous induction—the physical, visual, and imaginative process the visitor to the Roman house experienced as s/he moved from street to *atrium* to the raised stage of the *tablinum*, and potentially further into the other realms of the house beyond—is strikingly similar. My thesis is that the Roman house continuously provided an experience analogous to that afforded by the theatre. The visitors' embodied experience of the spatial ecology of the house and of the theatre mutually shaped and informed their perception of each.

The Vestibulum/Fauces

The prominence of doors for the unfolding of the plot in Roman dramas has been emphasised first by the characters themselves and subsequently by scholars analysing their *mise-en-scène*. Indeed, in a number of surviving texts, the doors almost take on the role of a character.[13] The entrance to the actual Roman house was normally attended by a doorkeeper, the *ianitor* (or *ostiarius*), whose role might be thought of as analogous to that of the prologue/induction figure encountered in theatrical performance. Often he explicitly juxtaposes the world of the play with the world from which the spectators have come, to fashion from concurrent but incompatible realities a conjunction of opposites (which is renewed and reinforced from time to time in the course of the play), essential to the concept of theatricalism.[14]

The domestic figure too was neither inside nor outside the "fictive space", but bestrode both while accompanying the visitor as s/he moved from one realm of experience and perception into another. Just as the spectator, once s/he left the external world to enter the ludic space of the theatre, underwent a process of induction in both time and space, passing along corridors and stairways before being delivered by the *vomitorium* into the radically different spatial and visual ambience of the theatrical realm, so too the visitor coming into the Roman house passed through an analogous process before entering into the *atrium* and the areas extending beyond it comprising the sphere of its patron.[15] Some households employed a *nomenclator* who

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[13] See for example the opening of Plautus' *Curculio*.

[14] Amongst numerous examples, see, e.g. the Prologue to Plautus' *Poenulus*, or the comments of the property manager in the *Curculio* (465ff.), who straddles the real and illusionistic worlds. For a general discussion of such metatheatrical elements in Plautus, see Beacham (1991) 34–43.

[15] Seneca warns: "Avoid the steps that mount to the houses of the rich and the porches

acted as usher, arranging visitors in order of admission and announcing their entry.[16] This process took place amidst spatial and decorative elements, which coloured the visitors' induction, giving form and meaning to it. For example, particularly revered objects, images, or military trophies of the most illustrious ancestors might be placed immediately around the entrance door or just outside it.

Visitors next found themselves in a transitional space known as the *vestibulum* according to Vitruvius (6.5.1–3). He notes (1.2.5–6) that the *vestibulum* should be of a size and decor appropriate to the dignity of the owner. Ancient literary sources indicate that the *vestibulum* was a place where clients thronged to await their entrance into the house and their admission into the presence of its *dominus*. In most cases at Pompeii and Herculaneum, its notional space and function seem to have merged into that of the *fauces*, the passageway leading from the external doors to the threshold of the *atrium*.[17] The essential point is that there was a liminal area, thought of as neither outside the house nor yet fully within, and therefore as the site, and, as one moved through it, the *occasion*, for a rite of passage; transitional initiation from one realm into another; a "highly charged act".[18] The painting could achieve, for example in the liminal space of a *fauces*, a near-invisible transition between the external real and the interior fictive realms; through its artificial effects it both "stage managed" the movement of the visitor, and also, as that movement took place, the painting created the beginnings of a fictive environment.[19] Frequently a small sacred shrine was positioned within this space, to mark the transition of boundaries, as one moved from the realm protected by civic rites to that controlled by the household gods.

(*vestibula*) made dangerous by the huge throng; there you stand not only on a precipice, but on slippery ground." (*Epist. Mor.* 84.12).

[16] Seneca describes the role of the *nomenclator*, *De Ben.* 6.33.4.

[17] The ancient sources indicate the ambiguous nature of the terms. Apart from its use by Vitruvius, "*fauces*" does not appear to have been employed as a term to describe the passageway leading from the door to the *atrium*. Both *vestibulum* and *fauces* are discussed extensively in Leach (1993), (1997) 53–55, and (2004) 23–24; 29.

[18] Kellum (1999) 284. She cites ancient references to the significance of thresholds, including Ovid *Trist.* 1.3.55; Juvenal 1.96; and the article by Ogle (1911) 251–271. See too on the subject of liminal rites-of-passage Turner (1969) and van Gennep (1960).

[19] After being greeted by Trimalchio's *ostiarius*, Encolpius is surprised by a painted guard dog, and then observes along the *fauces* pictures depicting both actual and "mythologized" events from the patron's life (*Sat.* 29).

Figure 3. House of the Faun (6.12.2). Vestibule with sacred shrine. (Blazeby for King's Visualisation Lab)

Figure 4. House of the Faun (6.12.2). Threshold mosaic at *atrium* entrance. Naples Museum (inv. 9994). (Denard for King's Visualisation Lab)

The Atrium

Having arrived at, and crossed the threshold into, the *atrium*, the visitor becomes more deeply immersed in an architectural and decorative ambience that invites comparison with the theatre.[20] Like the *cavea* of the Roman theatre, the *atrium* (sometimes the rooms around it were called the *cavum aedium*,) is a self-contradictory conjunction of polar opposites: external and internal, public and private; real and fictional. It is partly enclosed by an architecture that through the grandeur of its materials modulates and conditions the perception of the spectator, but is also open to the sky. Like the *cavea* of the theatre it was sometimes shaded from the sun by *vela* (awnings).[21]

At the centre of the *atrium*, its perimeter often set off by patterned marble or mosaic, was the rectangular *impluvium* filled with water, and frequently embellished with small statues or a fountain. We know that Pompeii's Large Theatre from the period of Sulla (80 BC) until AD 79 had a series of water basins (some six in all), of various shapes and sizes, prominently located in its orchestra. One of these, circular, had a diameter of over seven meters, another, rectangular, was some six by four meters, with a depth of over one-and-a-half meters: closely resembling an over-sized *impluvium*.[22] We do not

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[20] In the House of the Faun (6.12.2–5), one entered the *atrium* over a strip of mosaic depicting two masks of tragedy, with Dionysian drums surrounded by a sumptuous garland of fruit.

[21] Pliny (*Nat. Hist*. 19.24–25) describes the *vela* used in different contexts, including the great star spangled awning above Nero's amphitheatre, and then notes that "red awnings are used in the inner courts (*cavis aedium*) of houses and keep the sun off the moss there; but for other purposes white has remained consistently in favour".

[22] Tosi (2003) 165; 168–169.

Figure 5. House of the Tragic Poet (6.11.8). From F. Niccolini
Le case ed i monumenti di Pompei designate e discritti Vol. 1, 1854.

know what the function of these was, or whether they were normally covered over, or left constantly in view. One possibility is that they were for aquatic displays, another that they served as fountains or as part of devices to spray cooling scented mist out over the audience. In any case, they existed, theatre visitors would have been aware of them, and such awareness may further have contributed to the theatrically inflected perception of the *mise-en-scène* of the house, posited here.

A number of explicit examples of the importation of columns from the theatre directly into aristocratic *atria* suggests how their deployment helped to cast the house as a "public" space which thereby *demanded* to be compared to public venues such as theatres.[23]

At Pompeii and Herculaneum both *real* columns (as in the enormous *atrium* of the House of the Silver Wedding 7.4.2–16, or the House of Epidius Sabinus 9.1.20 with sixteen grand Doric tufa columns) as well as *painted images* of columns—as I discuss below with regard to the Villa at Oplontis—are frequently displayed in *atria*. And, analogously, but also as a cultural referent, the *scaenae frons* of the theatre was the columned structure *par excellence*; there the great multitude of columns along the wall of the façade filled no architectural purpose save to publicise, dignify, and aggrandize the space, communicating an impression of power and sumptuousness to the spectators. In effect their function was to perform.

The *atrium*, again like the *cavea* of the theatre, and not just aesthetically but also functionally, was a place of arrival and departure that could be very crowded, while it might also be a venue where visitors could linger to observe the scene and activity unfolding in front of them. A reflection of this multiplicity of function may be observed in the fact that unlike other areas within the house with which particular styles and types of painting tended to be associated, the variety seen within *atria* suggests there was no consistent "*atrium* style" of decoration (Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 47).[24] What is clear, however, is that in addition to serving as the hub of many and

[23] Pliny condemned the growing extravagance of private houses, and specifically cited as an example of such indulgence the six columns placed by the orator Licinius Crassus in his *atrium* in 95 BC (*Nat. Hist.* 17.6.1; Val. Max. 9.1.4). A scandal arose when Marcus Aemilius Scaurus recycled into his *atrium* columns of Melian marble, which he had earlier used to embellish the temporary stage he constructed as aedile in 58 BC; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 36.2.5–6. The columns were later recycled again, this time to the Theatre of Marcellus, in an interesting example of architectural intermediality.

[24] Although the decoration of the *atrium* of the Villa of Oplontis, discussed below, is the only surviving example of décor in the fully developed Second Style.

diverse activities taking place within the house, the *atrium* also played a role as its ritual, symbolic, and religious centre.[25] As the most public location within the house; that most frequently encountered by visitors; the venue for "performances" by both clients and patron where they ratified their roles through ritual; and the area with the strongest symbolic connections to the household and its *paterfamilias*, the *atrium* was, in addition to its other attributes, a place dedicated to display—a "showcase"—where the dignity and authority of the household and its owner were made visible and broadcast to the public.

As Dwyer notes ((1991) 29), "In every respect, the *atrium* house was a place ideally suited for doing private business. Ideal as a theatre in which the *dominus* might be viewed, the *atrium* along with the *tablinum* was also an ideal theatre for the *dominus* to keep watch over his adherents, his family, and his possessions".

Its theatrical potential was sometimes evoked by poets for setting dramatic scenes.[26] It was both the central meeting place between the external and internal world, and also the place where symbolic transitions were staged, such as weddings, funerals, and the coming-of-age rites of male children.[27] After the body of a family member had lain in state upon a dais, when carried forth from the *atrium* for the public ceremony of the funeral, the space marked the deceased's ultimate departure from the family. Other obligatory rituals and sacrifices honouring the ancestors, warding off unfriendly spirits, or devoted to the shrines of the household protective spirits, the *lares familiares*, or to the genius of the *Paterfamilias*, took place within it.

The *cavea* of the theatre was similarly the site of ceremonies devoted not to private, household concerns and protective spirits, but, analogously, to those associated with the public and the social community, some of which might be represented by individual shrines. Both the domestic and the theatre settings served comparable functions, and both were able to adapt and draw upon the syntax of theatricalism to represent and achieve these functions.

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25 For an analysis of the various household functions taking place in the *atrium*, based on an assessment of the archaeological finds in *atria* at Pompeii, see Allison (1993) 4–7. See too Flower (1996) 199 ff. to which my discussion is indebted.

26 E.g. Ovid *Met*. 5.2–4, 153 and 12.215.

27 It was also (for those invited into the interior) literally a transitional space, like the theatre itself. Cf. Scagliarini (1974–1976) 18–19, 6 etc., who classifies it as such.

The space of the *atrium* was configured as a veritable *theatron*—a seeing place—with the focal point the head of the family himself. As in the theatre, it was a place where those assembled were not a mere collection of individuals, but rather a collective entity, sharing their status as clients of the patron; in the *atrium*, those congregating for the morning *salutatio* had this confirmed and reinforced by receiving from him small gifts—*sportula*—of money or food.[28] The same practice, (often described by the same word) was evident in the theatre, when the presiding official bestowed both gifts of entertainment, as well as often a shower (*sparsio*) of presents and food dropped down upon the audience using a mechanism called the *linea*.[29] In the Greek theatre too comic actors could throw nuts from a basket to the audience; as for example mentioned in Aristophanes, *Wasps* 56–59. In each setting, the practice added an element of anticipation and pleasant expectation, colouring and enhancing the nature of an occasion in which important relationships of power were visibly enacted and materially ratified.

In the *Commentariolum Petitionis* (electioneering pamphlet) possibly written by Quintus, Cicero's brother, the author emphasises the importance of an engaging show to capture the attention and admiration of spectators; both the house itself and the demeanour of the patron were part of the performance, and described as a sort of double-act. "You should be available day and night, not merely through the doors of your house, but also through your open facial expression which is the doorway of the mind; if it shows you to be reserved and withdrawn, it hardly matters if your door is open" (44). The house must be full of callers before daybreak. There should be an emphasis on conspicuous visual display, and putting on a good show; "*plena pompae*" which should be "brilliant, splendid and popular, with the maximum display and *dignitas*" (52).[30]

According to Seneca, the *atrium* could be crowded with unruly visitors; sometimes to the extent that even the *vestibulum* could be packed with those unable to gain access. Theatres are, in an analogous fashion, characterised

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28 For a discussion see McKay (1975) 32–34; Wiseman (1982) 28–49. For *sportula* see also Marquardt (1886) 207–212. For the related gift-giving custom of the *sparsio* see Nibley (1944–1945).

29 Graefe (1979) 1: 114–116 details the literary and pictorial evidence for use of such gift-dispersing devices in the theatre and amphitheatre. For a reconstruction of the mechanism of the *linea* see Killeen (1959). For the *sparsio* see Nibley (1944–1945). Seneca likens the distribution of such "gifts suspended above them" and the subsequent mad, destructive and demeaning scramble, to the wanton role of fortune in men's affairs. (*Epist.* 74.7–9).

30 In general see appendix "*Existimatio* and *Fama*" in Yavetz (1983) 214–227.

by Horace as "packed" (*stipata*). Again, like the theatre, with its strict categorisation of spectators, clients entering the *atrium* were also organised according to status, and might be permitted to enter singly, in select company, or as a crowd.[31]

Finally, as an extension of their visual character, both *cavea* and *atrium* shared the quality of being simultaneously real and fictive; actual social and hierarchical conventions and activities operated within them, but they also displayed potent evocations of the past, and expressed a variety of symbolic associations. In each, performances took place in the presence of both the living and the dead. Each often had statues and busts of prominent figures displayed within it; inside *atria* ancestral masks and insignia of office were objects of observation as well as veneration by spectators,[32] while in the theatre, honorific inscriptions, trophies and works of art reminded the audience of past patrons and illustrious leaders. In the house (analogous to the prominent disposition of statues in the theatre), the masks were elevated—sometimes framed within individual cupboards—to be visible over the heads of what was frequently a crowd of spectators.

On one level of course such domestic displays and practices associated with them might be viewed as straightforwardly commemorative and allusive: they evoked ideas and called to mind cultural memories associated with past or present individuals. However, it seems likely that such images both in the house and the theatre, and the imaginative ambience they created, impacted more strongly upon ancient viewers than simply acting as aids to memory. From the period of the early Greek philosophers, thinking of something was conceived within some ancient philosophical discourses as itself a creative act: to call a thing to mind was to bring it into existence.[33] "The Roman was accustomed to thinking in metaphorical terms. His mind was a storehouse of word pictures …: 'faith', 'victory' and 'generosity' are mere concepts to us. The Roman vividly personified such ideas, their names invoked for him concrete images" (Fears (1981) 845). Representative images and objects gathered into a particular space had the capacity to change it, to transform it into a cognitive "magnetic field": an aestheticised zone experienced as simultaneously fictive and real.

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31 Horace, *Epist*. 2.1.60; Seneca: *Epist. Mor*. 76.12; *De Ben*. 6.34.1–5; *Cons. Ad Marciam* 6.10.1; cf. Cicero *de Orat*. 1.45.199; *ad Att*. 2.15.2.

32 Pliny *Nat Hist*. 35. 4–15. He characterises (6) observers as spectators: "*spectarerunt*".

33 It was one reason that certain types of images were considered so dangerous and disturbing in some philosophical estimations, as well as of course, by Vitruvius. Cf. Kenny (2004) 162 on the philosophy of Parmenides (fragment 28 B8 34–43) and the question whether thinking of something brought it into existence.

In the *atrium*, the masks and busts were similarly provocative. Sallust wrote "I have often heard that Quintus Maximus, Publius Scipio and other illustrious citizens of our state, used to say that the sight of their ancestors' portrait masks fired their hears with an ardent desire to merit honour. Obviously they did not mean that the actual mould of wax had such power over them, but that the memory of what others have accomplished kindles in the breasts of noble men a flame that is not quenched until their own prowess has won similar glory and renown" (*Jugurtha* 4, trans. S. Handford 1963).

Pliny the Elder noted that in his day portrait masks in *atria* were being displaced by statues and busts, sometimes including honorary statues of patrons placed there by clients. (*Nat. Hist.* 4.17.5). Earlier it was different. "Outside and around the entrance there were other pictures of great ancestors and here were attached spoils taken from defeated enemies, which not even a purchaser of the house was permitted to remove. Thus the houses celebrated a perpetual triumph even though the owners changed." (*Nat. Hist.* 35.6–7).[34]

The custom of displaying in perpetuity military spoils and associated ornaments both outside the house and in its vestibule and *atrium* was a uniquely Roman practice.[35] Patrons of theatre buildings enjoyed similarly lasting honour. During the early imperial period (influenced perhaps by Pompey's suggestive example) it became customary to display in theatres statues of members of the imperial family alongside gods and goddesses, the Muses, victorious generals and the like. Sometimes, in addition, painted panels depicting the Emperor and his family were set up against the stage building, to enable them, as it were, to enjoy watching the performances (and the audience), while the audience in turn contemplated and revered their painted representations.[36] Thus, in effect a dynamic two-directional process of spectatorship was effected; the audience were onlookers, but also themselves actors, under the gaze both of the statues of their political masters and their flesh and blood surrogates, the elite politicians and

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[34] "*triumphabatque etiam dominis mutatis aeternae domus*". In the case of Pompey the Great's "*rostrata domus*", decorated with the prows of captured warships, the house was taken over by Mark Antony and eventually inherited by the Emperor Gordian, when it still held these ancient ornaments (Capitolin. *Gord.* 3). For other ancient references to the practice see Welch (2006) 110 with n. 41.

[35] See Welch (2006) 110–112.

[36] Klar (2006) discusses the use of the theatre and in particular its stage façade to display and celebrate the achievements of generals and politicians.

Figure 6. Capitoline Museum "Barberini Portrait". Roman Senator with ancestor busts.

officials in attendance in the theatre. Both audience and patrons (living and depicted) were watching performances and being watched in their own performance.

A similar transaction characterised the domestic *atrium*. Here, both visitors and residents had constantly before them the evocative images of the household ancestors, while simultaneously their own behaviour was conceived as taking place beneath the watchful eyes of their predecessors' waxen images. Roman authors frequently allude to this provocative condition.[37]

The potently theatricalised character of the *atrium* extended beyond the house itself. During funeral processions the wax masks displayed there—normally residing in special cupboards (*armaria*)—were taken out, worn by actors impersonating the family's deceased ancestors, and used in the streets and public meeting places for overtly theatrical performance (Pliny *Nat. Hist.* 35.2.6). An illustrious corpse might also itself be represented in effigy and used in the funeral procession and accompanying rituals.[38] The actors were charged with assembling at the home, donning the departed family members' masks, robes of office and regalia, and then proceeding ahead of the bier on foot or in wagons. They were accompanied (very loudly) by musicians, dancers, and professional mourners (as well as by lictors for the ancestral deceased whose office had entitled them to these). These actors in the procession and subsequent public convocation for the funeral oration did not merely represent the departed ancestors; they mimicked and portrayed them. Accounts emphasise the significance of verisimilitude, as well as jokes and satirical exchanges relating to the life and character of the dead. These professional actors were chosen for their resemblance in stature and gesture to the ancestors they impersonated, whom, when possible, they observed while still alive to perfect the mimicry.[39] Thus, first inside at home in the

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37 Cicero noted, for example, that the family of Brutus had before them every day "to inspire their actions in freeing our country … the mask of Lucius Brutus," their illustrious ancestor (*Phil.* 2.26). He referred to an opposing advocate having to live up to and respond to the mask of his father (*Pro. Planc.* 51). He advised an associate to pick masks for display in his *atrium* which reflected his own moral values (*In Pis.* 1). He noted how ancestors could rebuke a person who did not live up to their example (*Phil.* 2.105). He observed how a successful defendant might return home, don festive garb, and open and decorate his ancestral masks, to complement and in effect take part in the celebration (*Pro Sulla* 88). A defendant who lost, by contrast, would return to face the mourning image of his father (*Pro Mur.*, 88). See too Pliny *Epist.* 5.17.6.

38 As for example in Appian's description of Caesar's funeral (*Civil Wars* 2.147.612).

39 Polybius, 6.53.61, using the word *théama* to denote a visual display; Diodorus, 31.25.2.; Suetonius, *Vesp.*,19.2. At Caesar's funeral, Suetonius (*Div. Jul.* 84.4) reports, the actors wore the robes they used in triumphal processions: another example of intermedial theatricalism.

Figure 7. Villa of Oplontis *Atrium* (Room 5), existing state.
(Blazeby for King's Visualisation Lab)

atrium, and subsequently outside publicly in the town, the dead were enacted back into life again, in a manner which ensured that, thereafter, both the masks and the *atrium* itself retained potent theatrical associations.

The Villa of Oplontis Atrium

The structures represented on the west and east walls of the *Atrium* are characterised by refined detail, colour, and sumptuous ornament. Significantly, the ranges of columns forming the extreme flanking walls which close the façades are joined together by reinforcing wooden joists—an indication that the entire architectural ensemble, although finely crafted, was nevertheless meant to depict, *and be seen to depict*, temporary (and probably wooden), rather than permanent stone architecture. Stone columns would not be linked by lateral wooden bars to provide structural strength and stability.

The setting virtually broadcasts its message: the noble refinement, wealth, and importance of the household for which it provides a magnificent

Figure 8. Villa of Oplontis *Atrium* west wall existing state. (Blazeby for King's Visualisation Lab)

entrance and focal point. But, more than this, the décor is coordinated and presented to elicit an active and complicit visual and bodily participation by the spectator. It thus establishes a theme which has been convincingly shown to characterise the visually dynamic coordination of space, viewing points, and the commingling of real and fictive vistas throughout the entire villa complex.[40] The effect is as if an unseen directorial hand were encouraging the "blocking" of actors' and spectators' movement around an elaborate stage set to ensure that particular effects are achieved and perceived.

In this carefully conceived and exquisitely executed visually opulent realm, the visitor (conditioned by the real-life theatrical referent evoked by the painted façades) could simultaneously appreciate—and hold in mind—both the impressive material conditions of the villa itself, and its patron's power to focus attention upon his dignity, culture, and conspicuous taste for aesthetic elegance by commanding the creation of the spectacular show at hand. The décor is a practical illustration of Plutarch's insight that "wealth loses all radiance without an audience" (*Mor*. 528a).

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[40] Bergmann (2002) 97–120. She noted that the villa depended upon the co-ordination of diverse media, and that "the effects of the ways in which these media were co-ordinated have not been fully explored" (p. 90).

Figure 9. Villa of Oplontis *Atrium* digital restoration by Martin Blazeby and depicting hypothetically the lost upper story.

Again, the concept of a conjunction of opposites explains the likely cognitive impact of such visually induced experience. Just as Second Style painting frequently created for the viewer illusionistic apertures opening out of the real architecture of actual domestic space into a fictive realm, so the reverse process is also simultaneously at work. The actual space, though elegant, is not architecturally on the same level of palatial refinement as that evoked by the paintings. Indeed, the real architectural elements in effect puncture the fantastic—and fictive—sumptuousness suggested by the encompassing painted depictions; they open up holes in it and in the process make the viewer self-consciously aware of its fictive nature; the process is analogous to the spectator's pleasurable perception of "make believe" in the theatre.

In close aesthetic and architectural harmony with these, the areas adjacent to the *atrium* and immediately accessible visually by those within it are also a mixture of the real and the illusory. Turning from the painted façade to look northwards towards the corridor and beyond (because s/he has been positioned by the perspective alignment to face the long walls upon a traverse angle, this requires only a slight shifting of viewing point), the spectator sees that the painted columns in the *atrium* elide into actual columns in the corridor and an inner garden (*viridarium*) immediately beyond it. In turn this small garden, contained within the surrounding structure of the house, but

Figure 10. Villa of Oplontis, *Viridarium* (Room 20). *Antefixa* in the form of theatrical masks. (Blazeby for King's Visualisation Lab)

seen through the large apertures (*Durchblicke*) created by a series of framing walls, has more *painted* columns simulated upon its side walls, together with a great variety of flowers, bushes, fruit trees, birds, a peacock and even flowing marble fountains; all artificial, but mimicking the actual correlatives of these within the garden itself. Around the perimeter of the sloping roofs surrounding the garden space (which is open to the sky) are drainage spouts (*antefixa*) in the form of terracotta theatrical masks, serving perhaps further to encourage an explicitly theatricalised sense of playfulness.

Gazing further, through this mixed reality and intermedial perceptual field, the spectator's eye travelled beyond the enclosed garden, through a large reception hall on the northern edge of the villa, and out into a formal garden extending beyond it. Penetrating ever further, one's gaze traversed the garden along its central pathway to the furthest end of which both the garden's plantings and sculpture were aligned to recede and converge at a distant vanishing point. The Romans evidently thought of what we would term "landscape" not as an open and ever-expanding three-dimensional space, but rather as a series of segmented views of the visible world, each of which might be conceived as a discrete plane of vision most effectively seen as a structured vista through windows, columns, or other framing devices.[41] As I

[41] See Bergmann (1991) 65. See also the seminal article by Drerup (1959) and that by King (1950) 76–96. The former writes (p. 150) of Roman visual theory: "external things do not lead their own lives, do not exist in themselves, but rather change as elements in a field of vision for the observing eye; they become scenery which is pictorially framed by the four sides of the window."

Figure 11. House of Marcus Lucretius Fronto (5.4.11a). *Atrium* and *Tablinum*. (Blazeby for King's Visualisation Lab)

mentioned earlier, a similar visual theory informed the use of painted panels, flats, and the creation of framed vistas in ancient theatrical scenic practice.

The Tablinum

Usually the *tablinum* opened directly off the *atrium*, from which its space was frequently concealed by a simple curtain or folding doors. It thus was an important spatial crossroads and visual focal point, controlling potential access from both sides, from which it was also lit. Normally in Pompeian houses this room displayed more complex paintings than the *atrium*, suggesting an area where, because of the nature of business conducted there, the eye was encouraged to linger. It provided a highly dramatic location for displaying the patron. As well as his abode, the *domus* was the seat of the patron's business and public life, and the symbolic (and to some extend practical) focus both of the house, and of his affairs, was the *tablinum*, where according to Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* 35.2.7), records were kept of family affairs and achievements accomplished in office by the householder.

Here, as a further expression of the conflation between public and private life, such essential moral qualities as *dignitas, gravitas*, and *auctoritas* were performed, visually and dynamically, as graphic expressions of self-presentation. This space and its configuration were crucial for conveying the patron's desired self-image to those whom he received under the formal conditions of the *salutatio*. The explicit demarcation of its space from that of the *atrium* indicated a physical transition, with social implications. It separated the householder from clients and theatricalised his appearance.[42] As in the theatre, where the dropping of the *aulaeum* marked the beginning of the performance, so in the *atrium* the removal of a curtain (or opening of folding doors or screens) allowed the patron to present himself at the moment, and in the setting and stance of his choice, poised for performance and "working the crowd". He stood or made his entrance upon what was often a slightly raised stage complete with paintings, props of office, and a supporting cast of supernumeraries. The *tablinum* was thus a veritable stage set with the *paterfamilias* displayed in his role, suitably clothed in his *toga*, or other robes of office, before a (desirably) large audience—which included the watchful and judicious masked congregation of his ancestors.[43]

From the *tablinum* the householder controlled his visual presentation (and consequently his perceived moral worth and status); he also oversaw and determined the access (including the visual access) granted or denied visitors. Following the introduction of peristyles, it eventually became the practice that those portions of the house lying beyond the *atrium* and *tablinum* were accessed through one or more of these. Similarly, the internal vistas of the rest of the house, visible either through a window or a doorway at the

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[42] Dosi and Schnell (1992) 46. Dwyer (1991) 27 has suggested that "in this environment, the *dominus* was set off as a static presence on a stage, not unlike the image of a god in his sanctuary." However, although the comparison to the stage is apt, the patron is far more likely to have been seen as an active (if performing) agent—moving and addressing and interacting.

[43] Again, this is a moment that might be compared to one in the theatre, when the principal actor appeared before the audience and "The crowded assembly of the theatre with its contingent of silly women and children is moved by the sound of such a splendid line as 'I am present and come from Acheron'" (Cicero, *Disp. Tusc.* 1.16.37). But if in part positioned as an "actor", the domestic patron also unquestionably occupied the seat of honour. In the theatre, this was in the *cavea* (or as patron of the games in the *tribunal*), facing the stage. In the *domus*, this spatial hierarchy was reversed: the seat of honour—the patron's seat or couch—was centre-stage in the *tablinum*. The ambiguity echoes that between oratory and acting.

Figure 12. House of the Wooden Screens, Herculaneum (3.11). *Atrium, tablinum*, and entrance into the peristyle. (AAR, 11639)

far side of the *tablinum*, could be displayed, or not, by opening or closing the curtains or folding doors between the *atrium* and the *tablinum*. Whether as a "performer" or in effect as the presenter of the rest of the house to its visitors/spectators, the patron controlled both physical and imaginative access to these areas, and how they were perceived and experienced by those entering them. Visitors and *dominus* would have been keenly aware, by long custom and practice, of their respective roles. It was, in other words, one of the many conventions governing and shaping the physical and mental activities in the house. Similarly, in the theatre, such an onstage presence of actors or chorus controlled by convention the introduction and release

Figure 13. House of the Silver Wedding (5.2.1). Axial vista from *fauces* through the atrium and into the peristyle. (AAR, 27016)

of the ideas and actions that resided, dormant, in the imaginative realm on the other side of the scenic façade until vocal and physical expression liberated and projected them into the performance. The spectators only saw, imaginatively or actually, what they were allowed to see via the persons who stood facing them from the stage, whose agency in turn was modulated by the spatial organisation of the venue.

In the theatre, this transaction was conditioned by the use of scenic elements, and the same was true of the Roman house, including the *tablinum*. The Roman spectator was accustomed to looking at framed images both in the theatre and in the home, when viewing the latter from a location in the *atrium*, through the doors of the *tablinum* and into the parts of the house beyond. In the theatre these framed images were fashioned upon wooden or canvas panels; in the house, alongside images very frequently shown framed in the format of wall paintings, the spectator saw such views through the rectilinear apertures of doorways or windows.

Two further qualities often characterised the perception of vistas in domestic architecture, and both are frequently observed in the spatial strategy governing the deployment of the *tablinum*. The first, noted earlier

in regard to landscape, was the principle of optical axiality with a series of views created along a visual axis. Bek has shown that "what was sought for in this view through doors, windows and columns from room section to room section across floors, *impluvia* and lawns was an effect of a series of symmetrically constructed planes lying one behind the other, rather than a directly linear progression towards a viewpoint."[44]

The other related principle was that of axial symmetry, which sought to give the impression (often ingeniously suggested) that the house was itself organised as a symmetrical ensemble of spaces, when very frequently it was not. As many commentators have noted, the visual axis proceeding from a centrally located point in the *atrium* by means of a linear series of framed views through a window or door in the *tablinum*, into the peristyle, and beyond, often concluding with a distant *exedra* or wall painting, was coordinated so that it appeared to reveal an architectural symmetry that very often did not conform to the actual axis of an asymmetrically constructed house.[45] As soon as the viewer moved from a static and optically determined axial position, for example, to walk around either side of the *impluvium*, or traverse the *tablinum* to obtain a wider, more panoramic view, this illusion was shattered. In effect the actual reality was fictionalised, in a manner which in turn could strengthen the theatricalised presentation of the patron.[46] It was achieved in the house, as in the theatre, where the arrangement of the stage and its settings in turn determined the optimum viewpoint, and consequently the preferred location, of the spectator.[47]

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[44] Bek (1980) Part III: "Axes and space in antiquity", 164–203; quotation from p. 183.

[45] This aspect of the House of the Faun is discussed by Zanker (1998) 39–40, who notes the provision of a special room reserved for the Alexander mosaic positioned on an axis visible from both of the house's peristyles, and by Coarelli (2002) 76–77, who discusses the division of the house into two realms.

[46] Bek (1983) 83 notes in reference to the House of the Vettii: "The tendency to stretch the line of vision by means of the optical illusion of false perspective … supports the suspicion that besides the harmony, an air of spaciousness was the sought-after effect to visualize the beauty and magnificence of the domicile and its owner".

[47] See Schnyder (1962) who discusses perspective and axiality in terms of the location of viewers and the composition and positioning of painted scenery in ancient theatres.

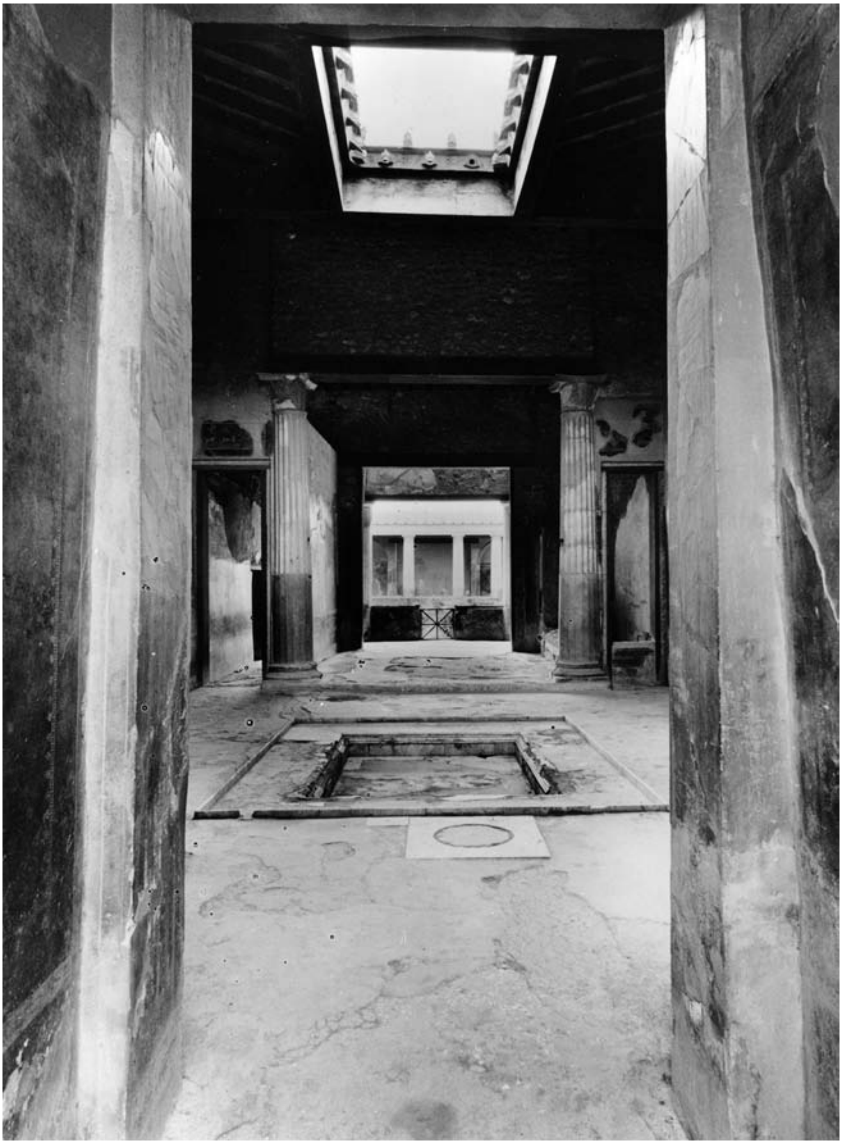

Figure 14. House of Menander(1.10.4). Axial vista from *fauces* into the far side of the peristyle, giving a false impression of axial symmetry. (AAR, 2577)

The Peristyle[48]

The visual and spatial organisation of the house induced complicit participation in a theatrically inflected experience of viewing; a transaction between patron and spectator within the domestic expression of a visual culture in which "porticoes, windows, gardens, and terraces all point to an architectural obsession with space, light, and panorama."[49] Vitruvius (5.9.5) illustrates this phenomenon specifically in peristyles located behind a theatre: "The space between the colonnades under the open sky should be embellished with greenery; because walks in the open are very healthy especially for the eyes, because the clear and purified air that emanates from green things, flowing into the moving body, clarifies the vision and by clearing away the thick humour from the eyes leaves the vision sharp and the image distinct."

Most of the living and reception rooms of the Pompeian house typically lay beyond the *tablinum*, around the perimeter of a peristyle. Some of the grander houses had two. The provision of a peristyle, an architectural entity widely found in the Greek world, evoked both the Greek peristyle house, but also the Hellenic shrines and palaces in which it figured, associations in turn imported into sumptuous Roman rural villa architecture. Consequently, urban peristyles, while evoking such associations, also visually called to mind—while the activities taking place within them physically embodied—the lifestyle of great country or seaside estates. Such urban peristyles were therefore allusive on several levels, and analysis of examples at Pompeii suggests that all of these were consciously exploited by their creators and their users. Zanker and others stress how certain houses, such as that of Loreius Tiburtinus (2.2.5), which was fashioned with the aid of perspectival effects as a miniature villa, or the house of Marcus Lucretius (9.3.5) with its raised garden carefully framed in a vantage point from the *tablinum*, are in effect stage settings. By playing at being what they are not, the spaces and their occupants *in effect* become what they play.[50]

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[48] Various terms were used (sometimes interchangeably) which relate to the area termed here as peristyle. These include *porticus*, *ambulacrum*, *ambulatio*, *peristylum*, *palaestra*, and *gymnasium*. Peristyle is the enclosed space itself; *porticus* is the columned corridor on one or more sides of the peristyle, with a roof; *ambulacrum/ambulatio* is a corridor or walkway, which was frequently within the peristyle. *Palaestra* and *gymnasium* generally but not invariably are used to refer to public peristyles. See Leach (2004) 36–37; 292 fn. 73; Leach (1997) 59; Allison (2001) 191; Bergmann (1991) 69 n. 37. The more usual Latin term is *porticus* or *ambulatio/ambulacrum*. The earliest joining of *porticus* and *ambulacrum* occurs in Plautus *Most.* 756.

[49] D'Arms (1970) 131.

[50] Zanker (1979) 496–497 and 470 describes this aspect of the two houses and characterises each as an *Inszenierung*.

Figure 15. House of Marcus Lucretius (9.3.5). View from the *atrium* through the peristyle to the raised garden and its elaborate display of statuary. (Alinari, 5172)

Figure 16. House of Marcus Lucretius (9.3.5). From F. Niccolini *Le case ed i monumenti di Pompei designate e discritti* Vol. 1, 1854.

Figure 17. House of the Small Fountain (6.8.23) showing the juxtaposition of real and painted columns. (Denard for King's Visualisation Lab)

As a potent example of intermediality, painted depictions of peristyles (complementing their actual architectural realisation) very frequently occur in both Second and Fourth Style frescoes. They were also almost certainly represented upon painted flats in stage sets.[51] Their *physical* provision inside Pompeian houses upon whose very walls *painted* peristyles also figured achieves not merely aesthetic circularity and cross-fertilisation, but also a striking juxtaposition between the actual and the fictive. The visitor strolling through a Pompeian peristyle found himself experiencing "double vision".[52] On one side as s/he looked into the interior garden, s/he saw actual columns, while on the other side, as s/he looked towards the surrounding walls of the house, s/he saw painted depictions of columns. A compelling example of this type of play between the real and painted architecture can be seen in the interior garden (*viridarium*) of the House of the Small Fountain (6.8.23).

51 In Plautus' *Mostellaria* (908 ff.) characters "view" and discuss the domestic peristyle noting that it is larger than any in the city.

52 Cf. the theory of conceptual blending, e.g. in Turner and Fauconnier (2002).

Figure 18. Visualisation of the peristyle of the Boscoreale Villa (excavated in 1899, then reburied), showing the real and painted columns described in the excavation report as identical. (Virtual Reconstruction by Baker, King's Visualisation Lab, for the Metropolitan Museum New York)

Sometimes only a segment or corner of a peristyle was constructed, so that, from the *atrium* area of the house, it created the illusion of a complete peristyle, partially hidden from view. This Roman deployment of the peristyle, whether partial or whole, served to evoke the *idea* of the culturally iconic Greek peristyle. Its employment in Roman housing, however, was fundamentally different from its use in the Hellenic world. It was at the heart of the Greek domestic complex, with most other rooms located around it. At Pompeii, and presumably elsewhere in the Roman world, it remained spatially distinct from the front part of the house, and was apparently thought of as an *ambulatio*—a place for walking, mediation and philosophical discourse. Roman peristyles also had *exedrae* attached to them, which were similarly thought of as places for intellectual discussion.[53]

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[53] Vitruvius 7.5.1–2, who notes that in them, because of their size, painters "designed stage

The Roman domestic peristyle therefore appears to be quoting such Hellenic *public* structures, rather than *private* houses, and to be evoking the ideas they embody. In this too their theatricality may be discerned, because the peristyle was not just an architectural borrowing from Greek public spaces or the villas of the Roman elites; it aesthetically sought to turn the Roman *domus* into a miniaturised model of grand villas and Hellenistic public spaces, and provided an imagined landscape inspiring performance appropriate to them: a further potent experience of double-vision.

Pompeii boasted a prominent example of a peristyle functioning as a public structure, dating from its Hellenistic period—possibly modified after the arrival of Sulla's colonists—in the form of the extensive *quadriporticus* located immediately behind the large theatre. It was a self-conscious and suggestive association between Greek culture and the world of the imagination. Zanker ((1998) 51–52) has pointed out that this "theatre district" (his term) included a ceremonial gateway to it from the city, which served to introduce the visitor, imaginatively, into "the world of Hellenism". This gateway also created a visually framed "prospect" of the precinct "to make the view appear like a 'painted' stage backdrop". As we observed earlier, a very similar framing system was employed in Pompeian domestic architecture to set off vistas, including in particular the view of the peristyle from the entrance area of the *atrium*.

The incorporation of peristyles into private dwellings, where their particular quality was emphasised by being accessed from the rest of the house only after passing through physical barriers, and by their specialised usage, thus constituted an analogous approach to the process of acculturation evident in the layout of the town itself. In both public and private architecture, through such "conjunctions of opposites" and mixing of realities, Pompeii's residents appear to have consciously fashioned and performed a special and complex relationship with Hellenic culture.

A *porticus post scaenam* such as that at Pompeii was a defining feature of Roman theatre complexes. The provision of a domestic peristyle could hardly have taken place without importing both Hellenistic and theatrical associations. An even more intriguing aspect is that, according to Vitruvius'

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façades in the tragic or comic or satyric style"; Cicero, *de Orat.* 3.121; *de Orat.* 1.7.28; *Dom.* 116; *Tusc.* 4.7; *Att.* 13.29; Aulus Gellius 11.3.1. Cicero, *Off.* 1.144; *Att.* 1.18.1. Apart from Vitruvius, the word *exedra* occurs infrequently in ancient literary sources, and according to Allison (2001) 186 "was used mainly by Roman aristocrats to communicate their intellectuality, and in circumstances in which its physical characteristics also conflict with those of so-named spaces in Pompeian houses."

Figure 19. House of the Marine Venus (2.3.3) looking from the *ambulacrum* through the peristyle columns to paintings of festooned curtains on the long west wall, and mythological paintings on the south wall. (Foglia)

classification, which designated the domestic peristyle as *public*,[54] although being relatively remote and less readily accessible than the front portion of the house, the peristyle nevertheless provided the locus around which the most *private* spaces of the Roman house were eventually grouped. This elevated the patron's personal activities to the status of quasi-public events—a powerful piece of domestic propaganda!

Such ideologically suggestive potential increased as gradually other rooms were placed around the peristyle. Dining rooms (customary venues for performance), bedrooms, bath complexes, rooms intended for lounging, reading or viewing pictures, were added to it. Often primary physical access (or in some cases, only visual access) was provided directly through the *tablinum*, while servants were enabled to come and go without disturbing visitors in the peristyle rooms, or disrupt the vistas. From there the patron

[54] 6.5.2: *loca communia cum extraneis*—"areas shared with outsiders".

Figure 20. Villa of Oplontis, *triclinium* (Room 23) viewed from its entrance opening onto the peristyle. It features the depiction of a stage-like structure and theatrical mask on the far wall. (Blazeby for King's Visualisation Lab)

was enabled, as we noted earlier, to "stage-manage" movement as a sequential experience, and both the visual and physical perception of the house in a variety of subtle or provocative ways.[55]

Although Vitruvius designated the peristyle a "public" area of the house, it provided access to the "private" spaces which could be entered "by invitation only". As visitors moved around the central courtyard within the portico surrounding it, they could catch glimpses through its columns of diverse distant rooms and might also look more searchingly into areas closer at

[55] See also Dickmann (1997), especially p. 132. Bek (1980) 187 points out that it was possible through the presence of two separate ensembles of rooms to give two distinct thematic spheres; e.g. the House of Menander, in which the town and public life are emphasised in the *atrium* section, while nature and rural delights characterise the peristyle section.

Figure 21. Visualisation from the peristyle of the Boscoreale Villa, looking into Room H. (Virtual Reconstruction by Baker, King's Visualisation Lab, for the Metropolitan Museum New York)

hand, when these were not closed by doors or curtains. These rooms opening off the garden potentially provided a rich repertoire of spaces and images, to encourage and extend the scenically induced contemplation of mythic or imaginary realms introduced in the peristyle.

Cicero alludes in his letters and other writings to the peristyle's symbolic association with various types of refined behaviour, and how in turn its provision and décor served as a setting for the self-representation of the patron and his guests. In his villa at Tusculum, he designates one area of the peristyle as his "Lyceum", and another as his "Academy" (*Div.* 1.8; 2.8; *Tusc.* 1.8–9; 2.9; *Att.* 1.11.3). To furnish these with appropriate "props", he sought and acquired from his friend Atticus objects specifically suitable to the site and its associations (*Att.* 1.5.7; 1.6.2). Later (see *Att.* 1.8.2), Cicero urged him to procure more "statues and other objects appropriate to our study and the site ... particularly things you deem right for the *gymnasium*", and still later he asked for something specifically worthy of the "dignity" of the Academy (*Att.* 1.9.2). Atticus sent a statue of Athena (*Hermathena*), and when it arrived

Cicero expressed his delight with it, primarily it seems because it was right for him (*mihi gratum*) and an appropriate ornament for the site (*Academiae proprium meae*) (*Att.* 1.4.3).[56]

On the other hand, Cicero was displeased by the figures of bacchantes and a statue of Mars which his agent Fabius Gallus purchased (*Ad. Fam.* 7.23) either for the Tusculum property or for his home on the Palatine. Statues of the Muses might well have been a suitable acquisition "for the library, and one appropriate (*aptum*) to my interests. But where am I to place these bacchantes? … And what, pray, should I, a peace-maker, do with a statue of Mars?" He then notes that he is preparing some new alcoves (*exhedria*) in the small portico of his Tusculum villa, which he intended to decorate with paintings—"indeed, if anything of this sort appeals to me, it is a painting."

Residents around the Bay of Naples were already thoroughly Hellenised in their customs, and unlike at Rome itself, devotion to the Greek lifestyle and values—self-consciously and often ostentatiously pursued—does not appear to have been tainted by strongly negative connotations; likewise, the determined pursuit of pleasure and leisure—*otium*—associated with Hellenistic values does not seem to have been a source of significant anxiety.[57] The use of peristyles was part of a process through which an element of self-dramatisation ("making-believe we are Greeks") was introduced into the culture of Pompeii's inhabitants as evidently a desired and widely embraced addition. Seneca the Elder called attention to a practice exemplifying this phenomenon, by which Roman orators might deliver a speech in Latin and then "remove their togas, put on a *pallium*, and return, as if with a change of mask, to declaim in Greek".[58] Suetonius (*Aug.* 98) recounts how Augustus himself, journeying in Campania during the last days of his life, "gave gifts (*munuscula*) of togas as well as cloaks [Greek *pallia*], proposing that the Romans use Greek dress and language and the Greeks Roman."

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56 See Leen (1991) whose translations of these letters I have used. Evidently as one who, amongst other things, wrote on philosophy and political science, such Athenian institutions seemed to him appropriate. Certain of his writings were notionally set in Athens, e.g. *de Fin.* 5.4.8.

57 On the topic see, generally, Toner (1995).

58 *Controversiae* 9. 3.13. Centuries earlier Plautus had noted the phenomenon of having fun and carousing in the Greek manner for which he coined the term *pergraecari*—"Greeking it up". Suetonius (*Tib.* 13) says that Tiberius' habit in Rhodes of continuously wearing Greek dress made him an object of contempt. For critical views of Romans donning Greek dress, cf. Cicero *Verr.* 2.513.31; *In Pis.* 38.92; *Phil.* 2.30.76; Aulus Gellius 13.22.1; Livy 29.19.11.

The domestic peristyle did indeed evoke the Greek world and the pleasures and pursuits associated with it. But, complementing and extending this, its arrangement and décor—the paintings, statuary, gardens and related amenities and the manner in which these were displayed and accessed—suggest that it offered withdrawal in more than a purely physical sense, and encouraged a theatrically mediated state of contemplation and fantasy. "As … nymphs, demi-gods and gods populated the landscapes of the poets, the spirit of a mythic world hovers around the Pompeian peristyles, giving them a breath of *locus amoenus* through their decoration and horticulture, their *opus topiarium*." (Bek (1980) 188).

The inhabitants of Pompeii, through their peristyles, displayed a further important element of allusion and role-playing. Many Pompeian house-owners clearly took villa architecture as their model, to construct what were, in effect and intention, miniature villas. Zanker has characterised these as "the stage sets for a new lifestyle of leisure. Certain rituals associated with this style were sometimes enacted in reality and sometimes only in the imaginations of the villa inhabitants and their guests."[59] The designers often arranged fountains, pools and watercourses, *nymphaea* and small shrines mimetically to suggest exotic or sacred landscapes, or elements found in grand rural villas. The central area might have substantial collections of statuary, sometimes constituting an integrated programme of related themes, while others eclectically evoke a diverse range of associations. Plants, birds, and the suggestion of garden landscapes were painted upon the low masonry wall that frequently surrounded the garden apparently to encourage the visitor to move imaginatively to and fro between a view of the actual garden and a vision of fantasy realms. Similarly, around the perimeter of the columned portico, the views of the actual garden in the interior were juxtaposed with depictions upon the structural walls of the corridor.[60]

[59] Zanker (1998) 18. He discusses the *villa urbana*, pp. 16–20, 136–140, and the creation of urban cognate architecture, pp. 145 ff. See too Clarke (1991) 23–25. Vitruvius uses the term *villa pseudourbana*, (6.5.3).

[60] Vitruvius (7.5.2) lists paintings of harbours, coastlines, rivers, shrines, mountains, forests and herds of animals amongst the subjects depicted along the *ambulationes* of the house. See also Bek (1980) 188: "the often admired naturalism in, for instance, the frescoes from Livia's villa … may be explained as the illusionistic-impressionistic representation not of this tangible reality, of Livia's garden, but of a different symbolic world, perhaps a Garden of the Hesperides."

Figure 22. Peristyle, and garden House of
The Silver Wedding (5.2.1.). (Alinari, 011387)

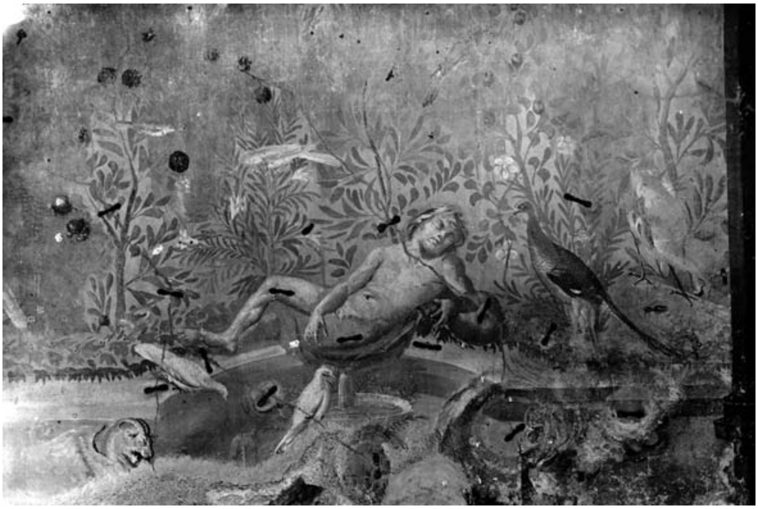

Figure 23. House of Adonis (6.7.18) painted garden
scene along the peristyle wall. (AAR, 24932)

Figure 24. House of the Golden Cupids (6.16.7), early photograph of the peristyle with its rich collection of theatrical and Dionysian artefacts *in situ*. (Alinari, 011994)

The peristyle's contents and decoration, and the rooms opening off it in relative seclusion from the front portion of the house, could be fashioned as a theatricalised zone; an extended area within the domestic complex offering scope for the presentation and perception of a variety of actual and imagined experience.[61] For example, visitors entering the House of the Golden Cupids (6.16.7), after passing through a quite small and plainly decorated *atrium* with a similarly diminutive reception area (*exedra*) and modest *tablinum* off of it, then entered a peristyle almost four times larger than these entrance areas to find themselves in a physical and aesthetic environment in which it may well have seemed that the idea and physical expression of the theatre and the home had so pervasively intermingled that they had "merged". The

[61] The topic has been widely discussed and illustrated. See for example, Zanker (1998) 145–203. For a comprehensive description of gardens at Pompeii, and a catalogue of the artistic works associated with them, see Jashemski (1993).

Figure 25. Marble tablet depicting theatrical masks originally displayed in the peristyle of the House of the Golden Cupids (6.16.7). Now in the Naples Museum (inv. 20462). (Pedicini)

focal point of this was its garden, which, Zanker has suggested ((1998) 169 ff.), like the seeing place (*theatron*) of the theatre itself, was meant to be looked at rather than walked within. Its "mixed realities" and the type of "cognitive blending" these encouraged in the mind of the visitor, are a compelling physical embodiment of the mental phenomenon singled out by Cicero (*Orator* 39.134): the manner in which metaphors (including visual metaphors) "transport the mind and bring it back, and move it this way and that", to produce a pleasurable response in the perceiver.[62]

Often guests could admire elaborate paintings of animals and hunting scenes (frequently set off by painted curtains) evocating the very entertainments they viewed in their amphitheatre, and saw advertised upon the walls of the same houses which might contain pictures of such scenes.[63] The sort

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[62] Cicero continues: "Other elements based on combinations of words greatly enhance an oration. They are like those objects which when used to embellish the stage or forum are called ornaments."

[63] E.g. houses of Marcus Lucretius Fronto (5.4.11a); the Ancient Hunt (7.4.48); the Ceii

of theatricalism characteristic of other parts of the house could elide in the evocative environment of the peristyle and gardens into what might be termed "amphitheatricalism". These frescoes frequently show elements of landscape—causing some commentators to characterise them exclusively as depictions of game parks (*paradeisoi*)—but displays in the arena also exhibited such scenic elements and could be elaborate.[64]

Frequently we see the same animals mentioned by literary sources for the games, including notices at Pompeii announcing forthcoming events in the amphitheatre.[65] There, although they do not survive, a series of paintings depicting pairs of opposed fighting animals were found between niches around the circumference of the parapet separating the area of the arena from that occupied by the spectators. Thus painting and performance were theatrically conjoined as each evoked the other; real men and animals were juxtaposed with their painted analogues. The eye could penetrate where (in this case) the body dared not go. A spectator subsequently encountering similar paintings in the serene setting of a domestic peristyle seems likely to have experienced both a degree of visual recollection and emotional *frisson*.[66] If accompanied by someone skilful in the art of *ekphrasis*, such images could be descriptively "opened up" to the mind's eye of the visitor, encouraged thereby to enter the fictional, fantasy world of the paintings.[67]

(1.6.15); of Romulus and Remus (7.7.10); the Ephebe (1.7.10–12); Loreius Tiburtinus (2.2.2); the Epigrams (5.1.18); the Chariot (7.2.25); and the New Hunt (7.10.3). For discussion of garden painting, see Michel (1980).

64 E.g. Jashemski (1993) 69–73; Zanker (1998) 184–189. Cf. Leech (2004) 130–132. Allison (1992) 244, in her analysis of the painting of animals in the peristyle of the House of the Ancient Hunt, notes: "the rectangularity of the landscape elements, including regular cut blocks for the foreground bank, suggests that this was an artificial landscape, perhaps an amphitheatre." See Calpurnius Siculus (7.57–72) on the animal games in Nero's amphitheatre, AD 57.

65 Only one painting however (in the peristyle of the House of the Ancient Hunt, 7.4.48) has been recorded at Pompeii that depicts humans hunting beasts. See Allison (1992) 244; Zanker (1998) fig. 108; Carratelli and Baldassarre (1990–2003) 10. 826.

66 Cooley and Cooley (2004), 208–210; Carratelli and Baldassarre (1990–2003) 7. 105–111 pls. 44–54.

67 Petronius (*Sat.* 89–90) casts Eumolpus in the role when he provides a lengthy verse commentary about a painting of the fall of Troy that had caught Encolpius' attention. Eventually passers-by begin to throw stones at him, which the poet dismisses, pointing out "whenever I go into the theatre to recite anything this is the sort of welcome the throng gives me". Later (92) he says that his verses similarly get him "thrown out of the bathhouse, as if it were the theatre".

Figure 26. Peristyle, with paintings of animals, House of Marcus Lucretius Fronto (5.4.11a). (Blazeby for King's Visualisation Lab)

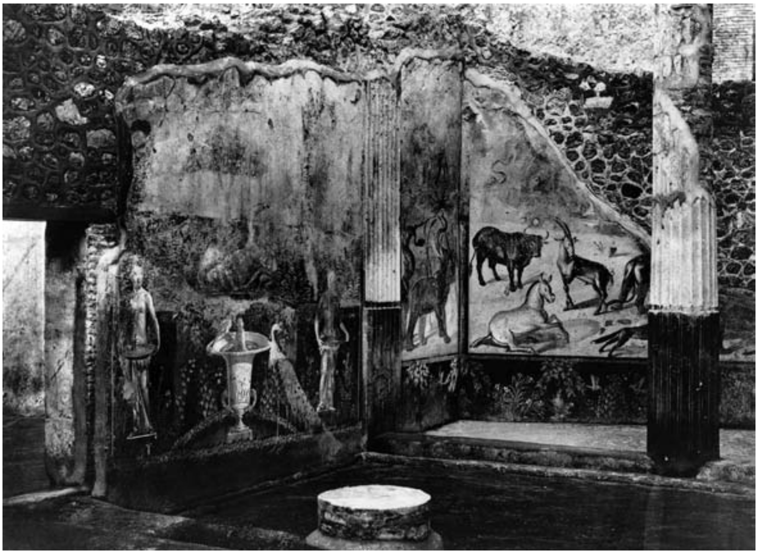

Figure 27. Painting from the Peristyle of the House of Romulus and Remus (7.7.10). (AAR, 07243)

Figure 28. Painting from the Peristyle of the House of Epigrams (5.1.18). (AAR, 07248)

The sequence, extent, and duration of viewing permitted a visitor were at the discretion of the owner of the house and those to whom he devolved such authority. According to the importance of the guest and the degree of favour his host wished to bestow (while displaying his own status and the visible "expressive elements" of his wealth, taste, and culture), the entire experience could be coordinated and in effect "staged" as a form of promenade theatre. The person (the host or his agent) who accompanied visitors on their tour performed as a master of ceremonies, presenting and commenting upon the rooms and their contents, perhaps providing a narrative to enhance the visual reception of the statues and paintings, giving meaning and context to the spectators' experience, and the panoply of scenes unfolded before them.[68] Certain areas such as large reception rooms (*oeci*) might encourage a sense of awe by their size and splendour and their evocation of the grand public spaces—libraries, picture galleries, basilicas—that inspired them; others, such as *cubicula*, could induce a sense of intimacy, while flattering and honouring the visitor granted privileged access to them by a generous and trusting host.[69]

Contributing to such theatricalised experience, throughout the house it was common for guests to view not just mythological scenes—which they were likely to have known most immediately from having encountered them in the theatre—but also "skenographic" Second or Fourth Style paintings, which featured in every type of room. Analysis of the distribution of paintings in the various types of domestic space reveals that, whereas in general certain types of painting tend to be predominant within certain types of space, the "theatrical", skenographic paintings are the most ubiquitously distributed, and such decoration "is not invariably governed by architectural room-type" (Allison (1992) 247). And finally, if a visitor was privileged to be a guest at dinner, his progress through the *mise-en-scène* of the house was likely to have culminated in witnessing one of the great varieties of theatrical performance that featured so prominently as dinner-time entertainments.[70]

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68 Pliny's letters (2.17 and 5.6) describing his Laurentian and Tuscan villas provide a glimpse at what such a narrative and commentary might include. For their discussion, see Bek (1980) 175–179. See also Philostratus' *Imagines*, Book 1, 4 in the translation by A. Fairbanks (1931), 4–7, where Philostratus "sets the scene" for his extensive discussion of paintings displayed in a villa near Naples, to a group of young men.

69 It is important to bear in mind, that *cubiculum*, normally translated as "bedroom", was by no means limited to this use. Such rooms might change their use according to the particular furniture—much of it portable—that was placed within them, and serve multiple purposes of sleeping, eating, private meetings, theatrical performance etc. They were in effect *polyscenic* spaces, and changed in meaning and activity, according to how their settings were arranged. See Riggsby (1997) 36–56.

70 See e.g. Quintilian 1.2.8; Plutarch *Moralia* 712-B; Pliny *Epist.* 3.1.9.

Figure 29. Villa Boscoreale, *Triclinium* (Room G), looking west, a hypothetical representation of a dining scene. (Blazeby and Baker for King's Visualisation Lab)

Figure 30. Villa of Boscoreale, room G, looking East, hypothetical representation of a scene from Plautus' *Pseudolus*, lines 1–40, performed by Angelo Crotti and Romans Suarez-Pazos.

TOWARDS A ROMAN THEORY OF THEATRICAL GESTURE*

Dorota Dutsch

Introduction

This essay began with the question: how much is known about the gestures made onstage by Roman actors? To answer this I originally planned to excavate Quintilian's discussion of the rhetorical *gestus* in the *Institutio Oratoria* (11.3.85–124) and to unearth the examples of gestures and postures that Roman rhetoricians deemed fit for the stage. Upon closer examination, however, Quintilian's discussion turned my attention from the particular case of theatrical hand gestures to the general issue of a code, that is, from the samples of *parole*, to the Roman perceptions of the very *langue* of theatrical gesture and its relationship to other forms of social performance.[1]

With Quintilian's views as a starting point, combined with insights from Cicero, illustrated manuscripts of Terence, and Donatus' commentary, I propose both (1) to reconstruct the Roman perceptions of gesture as a system of communication and (2) to identify the perceived characteristics of theatrical movement. The resulting observations will form a coherent picture of how theatrical practice—in particular the relationship between the performer's gesture and his script—was envisioned in classical and late Rome.

The Universal Language

My point of departure is Quintilian's flamboyant account of the communicative power of gesture in *Institutio* 11.3.85–88, in which he compares gesture

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[1] For a definition of social performance see Goffman 1959.

to spoken language.[2] This important excerpt deserves to be quoted here *in extenso* as a preface to further discussion:[3]

> (85) As for hand gestures, without which delivery would be mutilated and ineffective, it is almost impossible to enumerate them, for they almost attain the eloquence of words. For, while other parts of the body merely help the speaker, the hands, so to say, speak themselves.[4]
>
> (86) Do we not use them to demand and promise, summon and dismiss, threaten and implore, loathe and revere,[5] ask and deny, show joy, sadness, hesitation, admission of guilt, remorse, measurement, quantity, number, and time?
>
> (87) Do not the hands also prompt, forbid, [revere], approve, ⟨disapprove⟩,[6] convey respect and hesitation?[7] Do they not function as adverbs and pronouns when they point out places and people? Therefore, in the midst of the great diversity of language (*lingua*) among peoples and nations, this seems to me to be a means of communication (*sermo*) common to all human beings.
>
> (88) Those gestures that I have mentioned come out naturally (*naturaliter exeunt*) with the words themselves. There are also other ones, which signify things by imitation (*imitatione significant*), as, e.g., when you suggest that someone is sick by imitating a physician feeling the pulse, or when you mimic a cithara player with your hands shaped as though you were plucking the strings.[8] This type of gesture should absolutely be avoided in public speaking.

The most vital distinction that Quintilian draws between oratorical and other, as we shall see, especially theatrical, uses of gesture, is that the orator cannot

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2 The publication of the *Institutio* can be dated before the death of Domitian in 96 CE (cf. *Inst.* 10.1.91). Quintilian's discussion of gesture and other rhetorical treatises are often regarded as a potential source of information about theatrical delivery. See e.g. Taladoire (1951) 92–122; Fantham (1982a) 259–261; Graf (1992) 49; Aldrete (1999) 67; Dodwell (2000) 26.

3 In the present section, the references to Chapter Three of Book Eleven of Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* will indicate only the numbers of paragraphs, e.g. "102" for "Quint. *Inst.* 11. 3. 102." All translations are mine unless indicated otherwise.

4 The concept of "manual eloquence" goes back at least to Cicero, cf. Graf (1992) 37 n. 3.

5 Cf. Bonnell (1962) 898 on *timere* used by Quintilian in a meaning close to *admirari* in *Inst.* 9.2.26.

6 ⟨*Improbant*⟩, a suggestion made by Winterbottom in the apparatus, would complete this list of pairs of opposite actions ((1970) ii. 670).

7 See Meier-Eichhorn (1989) 51 on Radermacher's decision to delete *an non*. For this meaning of *verecundia* cf. Bonnell (1962) 947.

8 Quintilian's view of gesture corresponds to the Stoic theory of the origins of spoken language, which, according to Cicero (*De orat.* 3.149) included some "natural names" (*vocabula rerum*), some words used metaphorically (*quae transferentur*), and some used with new meaning (*quae novamus*) or newly coined (*quae facimus ipsi*).

use pictorial gestures that "signify things by imitation."[9] He writes that he has never seen a public speaker make the gesture of demanding a cup, threatening someone with a flogging, or imitating the letter D by crooking the thumb (11.3.117). We can surmise that the actor or a pantomime dancer, might on the other hand, have made such gestures when playing scenes representing banquets or angry masters threatening servants with flogging. This ban on pictorial gestures from public speaking is the first piece of information about the differences between the two codes that we can glean from Quintilian.

The other category of gesture calls for more detailed commentary. Hand positions denoting emotion, measure, and action form a category of gesture Quintilian defines as "naturally produced." Such gestures constitute a spontaneous language and as such are drastically different from gestures created to merely imitate actions. Symbolic gestures are in fact a language used spontaneously by everyone and for which all human beings are apparently hardwired. Quintilian's belief in the natural and intimate connection of such gestures to thought (cf. 11.3.84 and 97) can be traced back to the Greek rhetorical tradition.

Aristotle notes that the subject of *hypokrisis* has not yet been fully explored, precisely because it draws on nature rather than art, and therefore does not lend itself easily to theorizing (see *Rhet.* 1403b15–1404a19).[10] Aristotle's disciples, Theophrastus of Eressus and Demetrius of Phaleron, nevertheless, attempted to theorize body language, presenting it as "a visible manifestation of the human mind."[11] Stoic writings on rhetoric likewise implied the existence of a privileged connection between thought and non-verbal expression. For example (according to Plutarch's *On Stoic Self-contradictions*), Chrysippus commented on the proper order and arrangement of gestures as well as speech:[12]

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9 Graf notes the essential division between "gestures produced naturally" and those "which indicate things by mimicry," and observes that this categorization is not reflected in the description of gestures. He also offers a comparison between Quintilian's discussion and categories proposed by modern theorists: ideographs, pointers, pictorial gestures, and batons ((1992) 38–39). For references to other ancient sources discussing delivery see Meier-Eichhorn (1989) 11–21 and Graf (1992) 37–38.

10 Thrasymachus, a fifth-century sophist, was according to Aristotle (*Rhet.* 1404a 14) the first author to discuss delivery (cf. Diels and Kranz (1972) vol. 2, pp. 319–326). See Sonkowsky (1959) 268–272 on Aristotle's interest in delivery, possibly developed by Theophrastus, as a likely source of Cicero's view on the natural link between voice, posture, and gesture with emotions in *De oratore* 3. 213–227.

11 Cf. Diog. Laert. 7.43. "Movement of the body" was mentioned as one of the themes of Theophrastus' rhetoric by Athanasius (ca. 4th CE), cf. Fortenbaugh et al. (1992) vol. 2, p. 558. 10. See fr. 164–169 in Wehrli (1968) 36–37 with the latter's comments, pp. 80–82.

12 For the reference to the Stoics' interest in rhetoric, see Diog. Laert. 7.43. Sonkowsky

> I think that we should not only pay attention to an honest and natural order of speech, but also, in addition to speech, to the proper elements of delivery (τῶν οἰκείων ὑποκίρσεων) with respect to the tones of voice that impose themselves, and the expressions of the face and the hands.[13]

The assumption that oral delivery is really the art of controlling the bodily manifestations of human thought seems to have also functioned as the cornerstone of Cicero's view on "bodily eloquence": "For every emotion has received from nature, as it were, its own (*suum*) facial expression, its own sound and its own gesture" (*De oratore* 3.216). Cicero's use of *suus* here closely corresponds to Chrysippus' use (at least according to Plutarch) of the adjective *oikeios* when describing the proper kind of language and delivery, as both words imply an intimate and innate connection between thought and expression. Epicureans, for their part, stressed the connection between non-verbal and verbal language, presenting the former as the blueprint for the latter.[14] Lucretius in *De rerum natura* (5. 1030–1032) observes that infants communicate by pointing to things, using gestures even before they activate the ability to speak.

Quintilian, then, worked within a tradition that conceived of gesture as a natural interpreter of the mind, one that can be compared to language. His lengthy lists of the various functions of gestures in the excerpt quoted above emphasize the complexity of human communication, both verbal and non-verbal. The comparison between gesture and spoken language is introduced at the beginning of paragraph 85 with the arresting statement that hands are capable of speech, and is emphasized again in Quintilian's culminating observation that gestures constitute a universal human language (*sermo*) (87).[15]

Quintilian's views on spoken language, presented in Book One of the *Institutio*, allow us to discern the logic behind the apparently chaotic catalogue of what gestures can achieve. Quintilian begins his exposé on language with the rudimentary Peripatetic distinction between verbs (*verba*), described as the energy empowering communication, and nouns (*nomina*),

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(1959) 268–269 argues that the Aristotelian division of styles according to the psychological effects they produce influenced the Stoic views on emotions and speech. On the Stoic concept of language as a part of human nature, see also Long (1974) 125 and his reference to Sextus Empiricus (*Adv. Math.* 8.275).

13 Plut. *St. rep.* 1047A–B, cf. Long & Sedley (1987) vol. 2, p. 189.

14 The Epicureans also claimed that nouns and verbs were the very first words uttered by "men born from the earth," cf. Diogenes of Oenoanda, 10.2.11, Long and Sedley (1987) vol. 2. p. 101.

15 "*Omnis enim motus animi suum quendam a natura habet vultum et sonum et gestum.*"

regarded as a sort of matter manipulated by the verbs. All other words are classified as "conjunctions" (*coniunctiones*), which supposedly link the verbs and nouns (cf. 1. 4. 18). He continues his history of grammar by explaining that the Stoics later added several new concepts to this list: the article and the preposition were classified as conjunctions, while the appellation (i.e. the common noun) and the pronoun were distinguished as different types of the noun (1.4.19).[16]

It is the Peripatetic set of distinctions that informs the catalogue of gestures in Book Eleven. Certain gestures are explicitly said to function as parts of speech—demonstrative adverbs and pronouns (87)—while others are listed in ways that implicitly reproduce the categories of *verba* and *nomina* specified in Book One.[17] Thus, Quintilian represents gestures (85–88) either as verbs (the actions we perform by means of gestures) or as nouns (the notions we indicate by means of gesture). Quintilian renders most gestures as verbs and regroups them into two lists in paragraphs 86 and 87:

> *An non his poscimus pollicemur, vocamus dimittimus, minamur supplicamus, abominamur timemus, interrogamus negamus, gaudium tristitiam dubitationem confessionem paenitentiam modum copiam numerum tempus ostendimus? Non eaedem concitant, inhibent,* [*supplicant*] *probant* ⟨*improbant?*⟩, *admirantur, verecundantur?*
>
> Do we not use them to demand and promise, summon and dismiss, threaten and implore, loathe and revere,[18] ask and deny, show joy, sadness, hesitation, admission of guilt, remorse, measurement, quantity, number, and time?
>
> Do they not also prompt, forbid, [revere], approve, ⟨disapprove⟩, convey respect and hesitation?

Nouns introduced as direct objects of the verb *ostendimus* denote mostly emotions and numeric concepts:

> *Ostendimus gaudium, tristitiam, dubitationem, confessionem, paenitentiam, modum, copiam, numerum, tempus.*
>
> We show joy, sadness, confession of guilt, regret, quantity, number and time.

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16 Quintilian pursues his chronological account, describing the theory of Polemon, which "others prefer" (1.4.20–21).

17 The Stoic semantic theory distinguished between the true *lekta* i.e. things said, which have a predicative character, and the deficient *lekta*, i.e. verbs without a specified subject, cf. Long (1974) 133–137.

18 Cf. Bonnell (1962) 898 on *timere* used by Quintilian in a meaning close to *admirari* in *Inst*. 9.2.26.

Such a division of gestures into signs that function as predicates (e.g., "I forbid") and those that merely provide bits of information (e.g., "number one" or "joy") corresponds to the two basic linguistic categories named in Book One: "the first kind (i.e. the verb) is what we say (*quod loquimur*), the second (i.e. the noun) is the object of our speech (*de quo loquimur*)." Quintilian's comparison between the code of gesture and language suggests, then, the following tripartite division of all "natural" gestures:

1. Deictic gestures, equivalent to adverbs and pronouns
2. Gestures comparable to nouns, mostly conveying emotions or quantities;
3. Gestures that act or "do things" (comparable to verbs or speech acts).[19]

This framework outlines the overarching concept of gesture as a means of human communication. It applies to everyday exchanges as well as to public speaking—and theater. This observation, then—that the theatrical gesture is but a dialect of a universal language—is the second essential piece of information we have on the use of gesture on the stage: just as all other gestures, the actor's gestures would, in addition to mimetic or pictorial gestures, include the categories of deictic, nominal, and performative.

Quintilian further lists "natural" hand positions that are useful for an orator—all of which he presumes to be already known to his reader—and indicates in which circumstances they are appropriate (11.3.92–124). The logic of the catalogue is not immediately apparent since it is organized according to the principle of minimal alteration of the positioning of the hand (Diagram 1), a system that must have been most convenient for students trying to memorize the repertory. As an example, the description of the first gesture (92) differs from the second (93) only in the positioning of the ring finger.[20] This detailed account does nevertheless confirm the validity of our tripartite division of all gestures, as all the gestures described fall into (at least) one of the general categories: these are presented in Tables 1–4.[21] Quintilian includes six

[19] I am referring here to Austin's classic definition of the performative, more precisely to his discussion of locutionary acts in Lecture VIII; see especially Austin (1962) 98–99.

[20] Cf. Meier-Eichhorn (1989) 60.

[21] Some gestures are polysemous (cf. Table 6) and have different meanings corresponding to two or three different categories (as, e.g. the one described in 94 that can be deictic, numeral and predicative) and are named more than once in the Tables 2–5. Let us now consider how this specific catalogue of "natural" gestures might be related to the gestures used on stage.

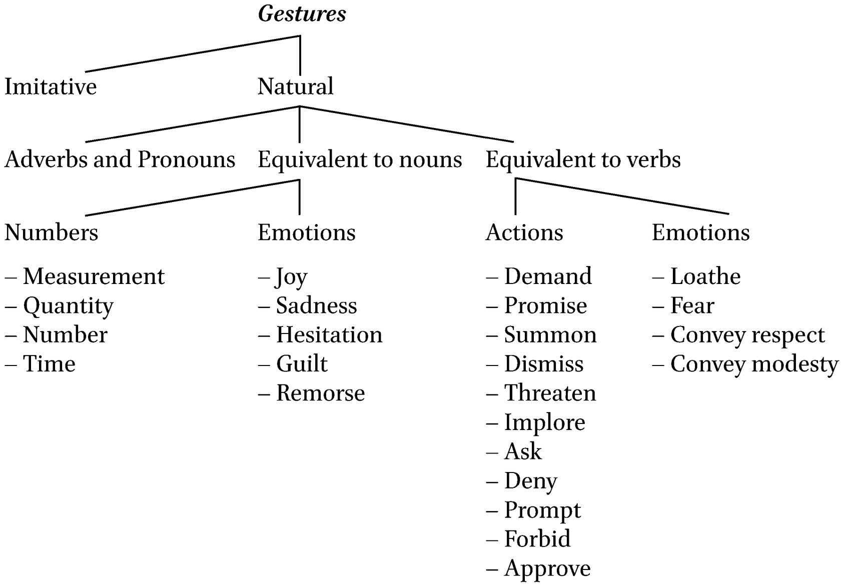

Diagram 1. A general division of gestures based on Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* 11.3. 85-88.

deictic gestures (Table 1),[22] three gestures denoting measure (Table 2), four hand positions expressive of emotions—astonishment (100), astonishment mixed with indignation or fear (103), anger and remorse (104), and horror (114) (cf. Table 3)—and a number of predicative gestures signaling narration or discussion and expressing promise, agreement, encouragement, or praise (Table 4).[23] Quintilian makes specific references to the actual parts of an

[22] Numerical gestures (Table 3) are mentioned only in passing (the outstretched index finger used in argumentation can also signal the number one, 95); counting arguments on fingers is mentioned as one of the few gestures requiring two hands (114). Lastly, gestures used to denote measure or time are described as faulty (122).

[23] Two more gestures, both used to manifest modesty (Table 4) also reveal the speaker's state of mind. The wording of the respective descriptions of these two gestures: "*gestus verecundae orationi aptissimus*" [a gesture most appropriate in modest speech] (96) and "*manus maxime apta parce et quasi timide loquentibus*" [a hand position most appropriate for those who speak cautiously, almost with hesitation] (100) insists on speech, rather than on emotions. In this respect it differs from other definitions of emotional gestures, which directly link the hand movements with feelings: "*gestus admirationi conveniens*" [a gesture fitting in wonder] (101), "*id admirantes facimus et interim pavescentes*" [we do this when we are surprised and sometimes when we fear] (103), "*manum in paenitentia vel ira admovemus*" [we approach the hand in regret or anger] (104), "*abominamur*" [we loathe].

Table 1. Deictic gestures.

	Meaning	Description in *Inst.* 11.3
1.	Pointing out	The index finger is outstretched, the other fingers put under the thumb. (94)
2.	Pointing out sideways	The little finger and the ring finger are placed beneath the thumb, while the latter touches the middle joints of the remaining two fingers. (99)
3.	Differentiation	The index finger touches the right side of the middle finger, while its tip touches the nail of the index. (101)
4.	Insisting on a particular point	The hand is open and shut quickly. (102)
5.	Pointing out	Thumb is turned back. (104)
6.	Demonstration	Both palms are stretched. (115)

Table 2. Gestures expressing number and measure.

	Meaning	Description in *Inst.* 11.3
1.	Number 1	The index finger is outstretched. (94)
2.	Counting arguments	The fingers of both palms are stretched out one by one. (114)
3.	Measuring time	The orator is beating the rhythm with the fingertips. (122)

Table 3. Gestures expressing the speaker's state of mind (denoted by nouns).

	Meaning	Description in *Inst.* 11.3
1.	Astonishment	The hand is turned slightly upward and the fingers are brought into the palm one after another. (100)
2.	Astonishment, indignation and fear	The fingers, their tips converging, move towards the orator's mouth. (103)
3.	Anger and remorse	Clenched hand is pressed to the breast. (104)
4.	Horror	Palms are turned left. (114)

Gestures expressing the speaker's state of mind (denoted by verbs).

	Meaning	Description in *Inst.* 11.3
1.	Respectful speech	The first four fingers including the thumb are converged, while the hand is carried towards the mouth or the chest and then relaxed. (96)
2.	Restraint verging on timidity	Hollow hand is moved frequently. (100)

Table 4. Predicative gestures.

	Meaning	Description in *Inst.* 11.3
1.	Narration: a. Exordium b. Statements of fact c. Reproach	The middle finger touching the thumb, while other fingers are stretched: a. Slow movement b. Vigorous movement c. Vehement movement (92)
2.	Narration: Disagreement	The middle finger is touching the thumb, while the two middle fingers are placed under the thumb. (93)
3.	Narration: a. Reproach b. Affirmation	The index outstretched, while three remaining fingers are placed under the thumb. (94)
4.	Discussion	The top joint of the index finger grasped on both sides, the last two fingers curved. (95)
5.	Narration: Vivid argumentation	The middle joint of the index grasped; the last two fingers curved. (95)
6.	Narration: Approval	The index finger touches the right side of middle joint of the middle finger. The tip of the index finger is touched by the thumb's nail, while the remaining fingers remain relaxed.
7.	Questions	The hand is turned. (101)
8.	a. Promise b. Agreement c. Encouragement d. Praise	The index finger touches the right side of middle joint of the middle finger. The tip of the index finger is touched by the thumb's nail, while the remaining fingers are bent. (102)
9.	Encouragement	Hand raised above the shoulder. (103)
10.	Disapproval	The hand is turned slightly upward and the fingers are brought into the palm one after another. (100)
11.	a. Apology b. Supplication	Palms, stretched out in front, are spread to the left or lowered. (115)

	Meaning	Description in *Inst.* 11.3
12.	Prayer	Both palms are raised. (115)
13.	Invocation	Both palms are stretched out. (115)
14.	Pleading	The fingers, their tips converging, move towards the orator's mouth. (103)

Table 5. Polysemous gestures.

Description in *Inst.* 11.3	Meaning
Index finger is outstretched. (94)	– Pointing out (Table 1) – Number 1 (Table 2) – Reproach (Table 4) – Affirmation (Table 4)
Hand is held upward, and fingers are brought into the palm. (100)	– Astonishment (Table 3a) – Disapproval (Table 4)
The index finger touches the right side of middle joint of the middle finger. The tip of the index finger is touched by the thumb's nail, while the remaining fingers remain relaxed. (101)	– Differentiation (Table 1) – Narration (Table 4) – Approval (Table 4)
The fingers, their tips converging, move towards the orator's mouth. (103)	– Astonishment mixed with indignation (Table 3) – Fear (Table 3) – Pleading (Table 4)
Both palms are stretched out. (115)	– Demonstration (Table 1) – Apology (Table 4) – Supplication (Table 4)

oration in which such predicative gestures would commonly have been employed.

The general meaning of such gestures would be equivalent to the phrase "In saying this …" supplied with the specific performative function, such as "I present facts, refute my adversary's arguments, show my approval or disapproval," etc. The meaning of a given clause, e.g., "Catilina is among us," could thus have been modified by means of various predicative gestures which could have theoretically turned this clause into an act of accusation, praise, encouragement, or disapproval. In Austin's terms ((1962) 91–93), such gestures inflecting the performative effect of an utterance would function at the perlocutionary level, modifying the locutionary and illocutionary acts. These categories also applied to theatrical gesture.

Theatrical and Rhetorical Acts

As the famous anecdote about Demosthenes' apprenticeship with Satyrus suggests (Plut. *Dem.* 7), theatrical and rhetorical delivery were viewed in antiquity as similar enough to allow an exchange of knowledge between those proficient in one type of performance and those studying the other. Aristotle observed that the art of rhetorical delivery was derived from theater (*Rhet.* 1403b20–30, 1413b5–12) and Cicero's friend Roscius apparently composed a book comparing the art of acting with oratory.[24] Both Cicero and Quintilian express unease when comparing a skill useful to a Roman citizen with an element of the performing arts,[25] and the troubled relationship of Roman theorists with the *histrio* as the orator's 'Other' has recently been a subject of insightful scholarly debate.[26] Here I would like to ask whether the theatrical gestures to which Qunitlian alludes fall within the three categories of deictic, nominal and performative gestures outlined above and, if they do, how he distinguishes theatrical from rhetorical gesture.

The answer to the first question is affirmative. For example, Quintilian describes a theatrical version of the predicative gesture of encouragement (*Inst.* 11.3.103, cf. Table 4), while the gesture performed with two hands, described as a *forte* of a comic actor named Demetrius (11.3.179), corresponds to the orator's gesture of horror (11.3.114, cf. Table 3). It is also worth noting that Quintilian's deictic gesture performed with the index finger corresponds to the description in Plautus' *Pseudolus* (1143–1144, cf. Table 1). What then, does he highlight as differences between the two traditions?

Quntilian's comments on deportment fit for the stage invariably stress aspects of performance other than the hand positions themselves. Frequency, for example, seems to have been an important consideration. His description

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24 Macrobius *Sat.* 3.14.11 refers to a treatise, allegedly composed by Roscius, comparing the rhetorical and the theatrical delivery.

25 Demetrius of Phaleron already makes some of the criticisms that we find later expressed by the Roman rhetoricians (cf. Wehrli [1968] p. 35, fr. 162). See also Cic. *De orat.* 1.128 and 3.22.83, *Orat.* 59 and Quint. *Inst.* 11.3. 111, 137, and 182.

26 For an incisive comparison of the orator and the actor, see Graf (1992) 48–51 and Fantham 2002; Aldrete (1999) 67–73 offers a survey of the changing attitudes towards the two styles of delivery; Gunderson (2000) 111–148 analyzes the theoretical construct of the orator. Connolly (2007) argues that references to acting and effeminacy are a part of a larger scheme that recasts the competitive relations between members of the Roman elite in gendered terms. See also Gardner (1993) 135–136 for a discussion of the legal situation of public performers and Edwards' inquiry into the reasoning underlying the disapproval of actors and acting ((1993) 98–136). Taladoire (1951) 28–29 has references to all places in the Roman drama that might possibly refer to the actor's gesture.

of an actor who would use several different gestures (*varias manus*) while reciting only three lines of *Eunuchus* (11.3.182) suggests that comic actors were in the habit of making several different movements in quick sequence.[27] On this occasion, Quintilian translates the difference between rhetorical and theatrical delivery into a rather interesting culinary metaphor. In this analogy he compares the frequent pauses, voice modulation, and gesticulation of an actor reciting the first three lines of Terence's *Eunuchus* with the true flavor of rhetorical delivery. Oratory, we read, has a flavor all its own, quite unlike the zest and spice of the stage. Rhetorical delivery does not need many condiments because, unlike theatrical delivery, it relies on the taste of true action (11.3.182).[28] But the main ingredients—one must note—remain the same.

Another issue to which Quinitlian draws attention is the speed with which each movement was performed. While different paces were apparently appropriate for different gestures (*Inst.* 11.3.106), slow movement passed for more dignified and, therefore, more appropriate not only for the orator but also for a tragic actor, and even for a comic actor playing a respectable character (*Inst.* 11.3.112).[29] The desired deportment of an orator coincides thus simply with that of a dignified character on stage. The orator, according to Quintilian, would have made most gestures with the right hand only (11.3.114) as his left hand would have been holding the toga or the scroll. He does name a small number of gestures that require both hands, those signifying horror, apology and supplication, prayer, demonstration, and invocation (*Inst.* 11.3.114–115). The actor, presumably, would have had more liberty to use both hands. He might have also been free to make larger movements than an orator, whose hand, according to teachers of gesture (*artifices*), would have had to move within prescribed limits: no higher than his eyes, no lower than his chest (*Inst.* 11.3.112), and no further to the right than his left shoulder (*Inst.* 11.3.113).[30]

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[27] This statement will not contradict *Inst.*11.3.108, where Quintilian refers to the many elements of one statement where "the gesture falls," if we assume that the phrase *gestus cadit* refers to repetitions of the same gesture, rather than to the quick sequence of various gestures, which is suggested by the expression *varias manus* in 11.3.182.

[28] For the culinary metaphor cf. Astydamas *TrGF* 60 F 4; Metagenes fr. 15 Kassel/Austin; Wilkins (2001) 100. In the Greek fragments, however, the emphasis is quite different: it is the dramatic work itself (rather than its delivery) that is envisaged as a kind of sumptuous dinner, complete with all sorts of side-dishes.

[29] Macrobius' reference to the alleged delivery competitions between Cicero and Roscius also implies that the actor's style would have involved a greater frequency and variety of gesture (*Sat.* 3.14.11).

[30] The orator was allowed to use gestures that involved movements reaching beyond the

The style of gesture, like any cultural practice, was also subject to fashion. Quintilian is aware that what passes for "theatrical" in one school may be perfectly acceptable in another place and time. For example, when he condemns the habit of striking the forehead and clapping one's hands as "stagy" (*scaenicum*), he has to disagree with Cicero who approved of striking both the forehead and the thigh (*Inst.* 11.3.123). This is all the more significant given that the latter gesture can be traced back to sources describing the deportment of public speakers partaking in the lively political debates in fifth-century Greece.[31] Another of Quintilian's anathemas, trembling movements of the hand, which he condemns as fit merely for the stage, was considered acceptable by some foreign schools, especially for a version of the gesture of encouragement (*Inst.* 11.3.103).[32] Quintilian's focus on frequency, speed, and size of gestures as well as his reports of disagreements among teachers of rhetoric as to what is and what is not "fit merely for the stage" confirm that, stylistic differences aside, he thinks of the gestures used in oratory and drama as rather similar.

On Action and Acting

Despite—or perhaps because of—this implied recognition of similarity between rhetorical and theatrical gesture, Quintilian (and Cicero) postulated that there was an essential and profound difference between the orator's and the actor's use of "natural" gesture. To pinpoint this difference, we

trunk of his body on certain occasions, but he had to choose the context with great caution (cf. Aldrete [1999] 13).

31 According to Plutarch (*Nicias* 8.3) it was Cleon who first introduced this to public speaking: he used to strike his thigh when addressing the assembly; he also did a number of other indecorous things, such as shouting, pulling off his cloak, or rushing around when speaking. See e.g. Wohl (2003) 81 with n. 17.

32 While this may be just a self-fulfilling prophecy, it is worth noting that Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus* (199–215), which offers one of the most reliable testimonies to the nature of theatrical movement in the original performances of the *palliata* (cf. Graf (1992) 49–51), agrees closely with Quintilian's observations and confirms his statements about the nature of theatrical gesture and the differences between the movements of actor and the orator. The brief passage from *Miles* describes with considerable precision the postures and gestures of the actor playing the clever slave Palaestrio as he meditates on a conundrum of the sort often faced by such characters in comedy. Palaestrio is depicted as changing postures and gestures at breakneck speed, and the situation reminds us of Quintilian's description of the actor playing a young man in Terence's *Eunuchus* (11.3.182). The actor portrayed as playing the role of Plautus' Palaestrio seems to have a predilection for noisy and violent gestures (cf. 11.3.112). He is beating his chest with his fingers (cf. 11.3.124) and counting by striking his thigh with the fingers of his night hand (cf. 11.3.122.), not to mention the use of his left hand (cf. 11.3.114).

need to recall Quintlian's insistence (see above) that imitative or pictorial gestures should be strictly forbidden in public speaking. The same Platonic distinction between truth and its mimesis is at the center of both Cicero's and Quintilian's theory of acting. In contrast to Aristotle, who presents delivery as the invention of actors later adopted by public speakers, Cicero imagines a reverse evolution of delivery: it must have been the orators who invented gesture, as they are the "agents of truth" (*actores veritatis*) while the actors (*histriones*) are mere "imitators" of truth (*De or.* 3.214). He further (3.220) specifies that the gesture of the orator is completely different from the "word-copying" gesture of the stage (*verba exprimens*), and that, instead of reproducing words, the orator's gesture should be an act indicating an entire thought by means of signs (*significatione declarans*). Cicero, then, seems to divide gestures into two categories: some are images, mere "prints" of words, others are signs conveying directly what the speaker means by modifying—rather than depicting—words.[33] (Recall the potential variations of the phrase "Catilina is among us" listed above.) The expression *verba exprimens* draws attention to the process by means of which the actor forces his body to reproduce a likeness of words which come from an external source, that is, the script. This notion would apply most poignantly to pantomime actors, and Quintilian indeed later refers to the dancer when formulating his warning against gestures that illustrate words rather than convey thoughts. Cicero, however, follows his statement with a reference to Roscius, the famous *comoedus*, and thus almost certainly has scripted drama in mind. Unlike the orator who, as the speaking subject, has control over his words and gestures, the actor makes himself into an object onto which words can be stamped or printed. According to Roman theorists, then, the essential difference between the orator's and the actor's gestures was ontological. The former were implicated in true action; the latter were merely mimetic.[34]

Quintilian also stresses the difference between gestures of the public speaker, which are linked directly to his thought, and those of the actor, which are merely based on words: "For the orator should distance himself as far as possible from a pantomime dancer, so that his gestures should lend

[33] For this meaning of *exprimere*, attested more than once in Cicero, see *OLD* p. 652, 6 a, b, and c. See also s.v. *significatio*, 1, 2, and 3 (p. 1758).

[34] One might add that the audience construes all actions taking place on stage (even if accidental) as being part of the theatrical semiotic code and thus endowed with meaning or "semiotizatized." See Revermann (2006a) 50; Elam (1980) 7–9.

their support to his thoughts (*ad sensus*) rather than to his words (*ad verba*)" (11.3.89).[35] Quintilian's criticism of gestures "based on words" pertained not only to pictorial gestures but also to symbolic gestures used out of context, for example in quotations. Thus, an orator illustrating his narration with imitations of gestures of the people to whom he briefly referred in narration would be making gestures *ad verba*, as an actor always did, not *ad sensus*, as an orator should.[36] This injunction against evoking the gesticulation of characters whose words were cited was so strong that even the comic actors playing respectable characters apparently avoided this practice (*Inst.* 11.3.90–91). It is worth noting that Quintilian's objection to gestures illustrating another character's words in citations confirms that, like Cicero, he is indeed taking scripted drama into consideration in theorizing the actor's or dancer's gestures as subservient to text.[37]

Gestus ad verba *and Late Antique Tradition*

The criticism of the actor's delivery as merely illustrative of words is a traditional *topos* of rhetorical theory, which can be traced back to Aristotle's observation that delivery gained prominence in the first place because poets were no longer performing their work.[38] To the Roman theorists, as we have seen, this *topos* provided a convenient foundation for the ideological distinction between men of action and mere actors. But the distinction between the (theoretically) spontaneous and auctorial deportment of an

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35 "*Abesse enim plurimum a saltatore debet orator, ut sit gestus ad sensus magis quam ad verba accomodatus.*"

36 This interdiction would have concerned brief references made in narration. The orator might have been allowed to introduce some gestures in the longer passages when he spoke in the first person in the name of someone else, using the popular rhetorical device of *prosopopoeia*. Quintilian does signal elsewhere that differentiating delivery styles was desirable in *prosopopoeia* (*Inst.* 6.1.26; cf. Aldrete (1999) 36), though he seems to refer mostly to linguistic characterization and voice, and never mentions gestures directly in this context. See also Boegehold (1999a) 79 on the necessity to reproduce the client's gesture in Greek forensic oratory.

37 For Greek attitudes towards gesture, see Green 2002 and Csapo 2002.

38 Cicero's *Brutus* attests to the author's mistrust of the technique of theatrical gesticulation. The gestures of Sulpicius, the "tragic" orator, apparently had a unique charm that seemed more appropriate for the Forum than for the stage (203). The ideal was a "naturally charming gesticulation" (*gestus natura venustus*) that seemed artistic, but was not a result of art (272). Cicero disregarded movements that smacked too obviously of professional training; he described his rival Hortensius as showing more art in his gesture than befitted a public speaker (303).

orator on the one hand and the studied gesticulation of an actor on the other, may also have reflected practical considerations pertaining to the manner in which each performer was expected to choose his gestures. Let's begin with Quintilian's description of the gesture of anger or remorse (11.3.104), which he regards as permissible for the public speaker. He suggests that this gesture was linked to two particular phrases:

> *Quin enim compressam etiam manum in paenitentia uel ira pectori admouemus, ubi uox uel inter dentes expressa non dedecet: 'Quid nunc agam? Quid facias?'*
>
> Also, when expressing remorse or anger, we move a clenched hand towards our chest, and it is not unfitting on such occasions to say through the teeth 'What should I do? What can you do?'

'*Quid nunc agam?*' is a stock exclamation of distressed characters in Plautus and Terence, and it features prominently in an excerpt that Quintilan chooses to illustrate a typically theatrical delivery:[39]

> *Ut si sit in scaena dicendum*:
> *quid igitur faciam? Non eam ne nunc quidem,*
> *cum arcessor ultro? an potius ita me comparem,*
> *non perpeti meretricum contumelias?*
> *Hoc enim dubitationis moras, uocis flexus, uaria manus, diuersos nutus actor adhibebit.* (11.3.182)
>
> For example, if the following lines were to be recited on stage, the actor would delay as in hesitation, and would use voice modulation and various movements of hands and head:
>
> What should I do? Not go, even now
> when she summons me on her own accord? Or should I rather pull myself together
> not to endure the insults of prostitutes?

This brief passage from *Eunuchus* (46–48), quoted by Quintilian, begins with a question almost identical to the one quoted in 11.3.104 as typically accompanying the gesture of touching one's chest with clenched fist. In this particular context—a demonstration of the peculiarities of theatrical gesture—we must expect a passage that evokes characteristics of theatrical gesture. It is therefore striking that the excerpt begins with an expression that would require—according to Quintilian's own instruction—the pre-programmed gesture of touching one's chest with a clenched fist. The

[39] For *quid agam*, see e.g., Plautus *Am.* 1056 (Bromia having witnessed a miracle), *As.* 106 (Staphyla tormented by Euclio), *Cas.* 938 (Lysidamus who has just been victim of sexual assault); Terence *Ad.* 485 (Demea upon learning that Aeschinus fathered a child), *Heaut.* 674 (Syrus scheming); Ph. 199 (Antipho learning of his father's return).

existence of certain phrases that call for particular gestures gives a whole new dimension to the notion of gesticulating *ad verba* rather than *ad sensum*, and suggests that actors might have been trained to use certain gestures consistently to illustrate certain phrases; Quintilian's advice, approving of the gesture of anger and remorse, would suggest that some aspects of this practice were considered acceptable by first-century teachers of rhetorical delivery.

The Carolingian manuscripts reproducing a late antique illustrated manuscript of Terence (ca. 400), suggest that by the late fourth and early fifth century the tendency to associate gestures with certain phrases took the form of a meticulous set of rules. These rules would probably have observed in recitation of drama, a performance genre blending the theatrical and rhetorical traditions.[40] The manuscripts from the γ branch of the "Calliopian edition" of Terence contain illustrations representing actors—masked and gesturing, placed at the head of each new scene. The repertory of gestures represented is limited (the *Andria*, for example, uses a combination of 14 hand positions). Gestures are used with striking consistency and always to illustrate the line the character speaks in the first exchange involving all his or her interlocutors.[41] For example, Plate 1, reproducing *Eunuchus* 1.1 in the Parisian copy of the late antique Terence, would correspond to the words '*etiam atque etiam cogita*' ('think again and again'). The figure of Phaedria (to the left) is consequently shown with a thinking gesture rather than with the gesture that would illustrate his initial line ('What should I do now?').

Donatus' note on *Andria*, 101, testifies to a situation in which the performer's gesture was literally dictated by Terence's choice of one particular adverb. The scene features Simo telling his freedman Sosia the story of his son's (Pamphilus') visits to the courtesan Chrysis, which the father initially considered perfectly acceptable. The comment pertains to the lines conveying Simo's reaction to Pamphilus' behavior at Chrysis' funeral:

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40 The dating of both of the miniatures discussed in detail in Dutsch 2007, where I argue (along with Dodwell 2000) for a late third century date. The manuscript of this article had been prepared before the publication of Wright's meticulous reconstruction of late antique Terence, based on the Vatican copy (Wright 2006). Wright argues persuasively for an early fourth- rather than late third-century date, and I now concur with his view. Samples of these illustrations are reproduced here on Plates 1–3: a tentative glossary of the gestures used in the miniatures, with cross-references to Quintilian (see Dutsch 2007). On the *recitatio* and its different types see Dupont (1997); cf. Hollingsworth (2001); see Dutsch 2007 for some (albeit inconclusive) evidence to continued theatrical performance.

41 On the tendency to depict the first instance of communication rather than the first lines spoken by a character, see Dutsch 2007. For attempts to decode the repertory of the hand positions used in the miniatures, see Dodwell (2000) and Dutsch (2007).

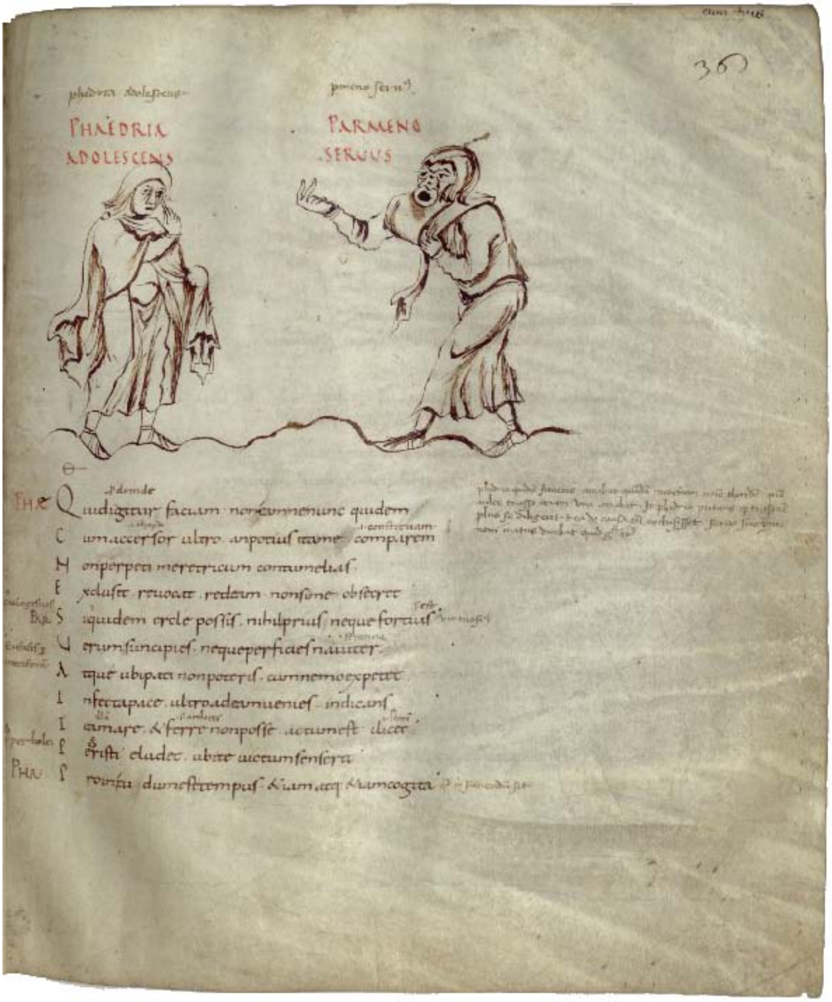

Plate 1. Parisinus Latinus 7899, folio 36, from left to right: Phaedria and Parmeno in the first scene of the *Eunuchus*. Reprinted with the permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

> *sic cogitabam: hic paruae consuetudinis*
> *causa huius mortem tam fert familiariter:*
> *quid si ipse amasset? quid hic mihi faciet patri?* (*An.* 110–112)
>
> I was thinking: "if, on account of a superficial acquaintance,
> he is taking her death to heart so much, what would it be,
> had he himself loved someone? What will he do for me, his father?"

Now, however, Simo knows that the real reason for his son's behavior was his love for Chrysis' foster sister. The discrepancy between Simo's past innocence and his present knowledge is an important source of irony, which would have been underscored by the use of the thinking gesture, allowing the audience to savor the difference between Simo's past and present feelings. The situation is interesting in the light of Quintilian's injunction against gesticulation in quoting other characters' thoughts: what should the performer do when quoting his own past thoughts?

Donatus' comment suggests that the correct answer to this question depends on the precise wording of Terence's text. He claims that the actor (or, we might conjecture, performer in a *recitatio*) playing Simo had to make "the gesture of thinking" to illustrate his self-quotation, because Terence uses the adverb *sic*:

> *Si dixisset 'hoc cogitabam', sensum tantum cogitationis dicere debuit; sed quia 'sic cogitabam' dixit, ipsum 'gestum cogitantis' exponit. est igitur* <u>*mimesis*</u>.
>
> Had he said 'I was thinking this (*hoc*),' he would have only described his general thought. But because he said 'I was thinking thus (*sic*),' he made the very gesture of thinking. This therefore is *mimesis*.[42] (*An.* 83)

According to Donatus, then, the thinking gesture would be necessary in the performance of this speech because the expression *sic* introduces a direct quotation and thus obliges Simo to enact on stage his past reaction. If the scholiast testifies to a practice he witnessed, possibly in the post-classical *recitationes*, this practice was to distinguish mechanically between self-citations introduced by the adverb *sic* and those preceded by the pronoun *hoc*; only the former was deemed a justification for auto-mimesis. *Hoc*, as Donatus suggests on several occasions, would have been accompanied by its own deictic gesture.[43]

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[42] Thomadaki offers a survey of references to the theater in Donatus' commentary to illustrate her opinion that such references are too numerous and too specific to be dismissed as evidence for ancient performance ((1985) 370–372). Cf. contra Basore's opinion that all references to gesture are derived from rhetorical theory, quoted by Graf (1992) 57 n. 37.

[43] A specific deictic gesture used regularly with the pronoun *hic, haec, hoc* is referred to in *An.* 30, 333; *Eun.* 595 and *Ad.* 454.

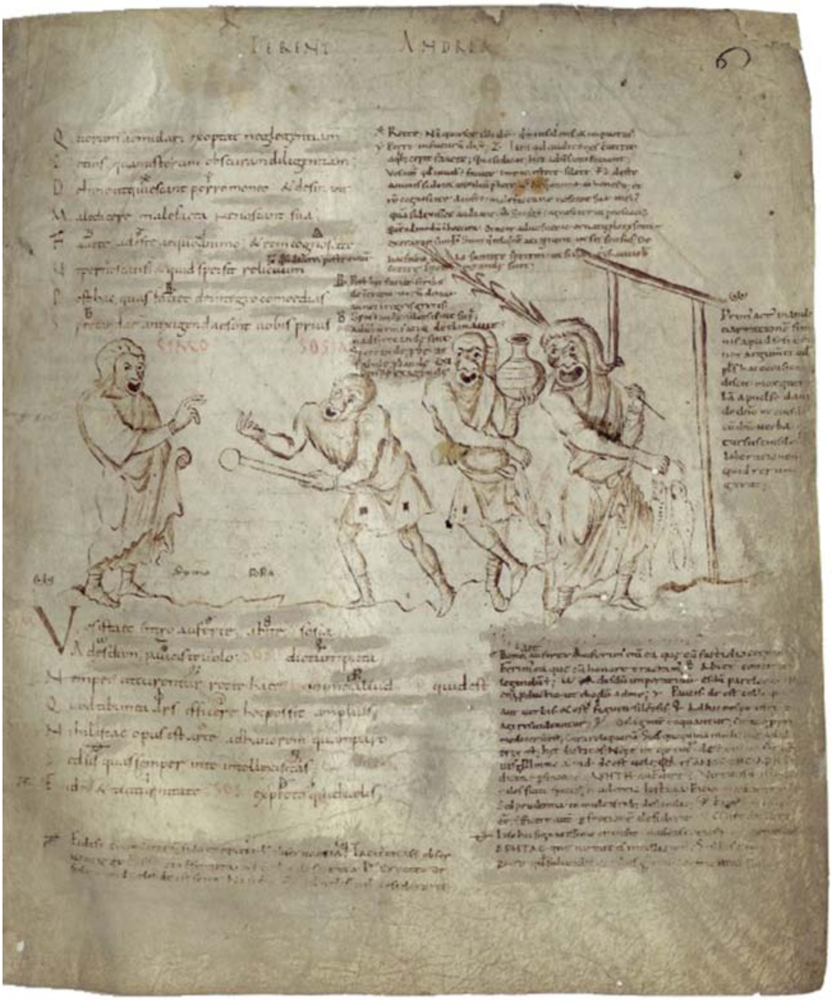

Plate 2. Parisinus Latinus 7899, folio 6, from left to right: Simo, Sosia, and two silent figures in the first scene of the *Andria*. Reprinted with the permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

If we now turn to the miniatures to see how they portray the same scene, we will find Simo with the gesture commanding attention (cf. Plate 2, left). This gesture illustrates the orders Simo issues when entering on stage (*An.* 289) addressing Sosia and the silent slave characters ("take this inside and leave; Sosia, wait …") rather than his later account of his thoughts (*An.* 110), but in the second scene (Plate 3, left) he is shown with a variation of the thinking gesture corresponding to *non dubitumst quin* ("there is no doubt that").[44] While such a perception of theatrical gesture as mechanically dependent on the script may well have been a late development associated with the practice of *recitatio*, Quintilian's comments indicate that public speakers as well as actors might have been trained to follow certain expressions with specific gestures several centuries earlier.

Conclusion

Both Cicero and Quintilian strive to distinguish rhetorical from dramatic performance, the latter creating a theory of deportment that encompassed scripted drama and pantomime as well as everyday face-to-face interactions. Quintilian's theory is based on the assumption that natural (as opposed to mimetic) gesture is an embodied form of language, used on the streets, in the senate, and on stage. He perceived this natural language as falling into three specific categories of nominal, deictic and performative gestures, that were distinct from the pictorial gestures, which he dismissed as both artificial and vulgar. In the light of this theory, the peculiarity of theater and other forms of literary performance would consist in the requirement of such performances that the expressive powers of the performer's body be subjugated to the script (usually) composed by another. Late antique sources suggest that this intimate dependence of gesture on script became codified in ways that indeed limited the performer's freedom. The performer's relationship with his text was at the center of the ideological distinction between the "natural" gesture of everyday conversation and the "imitative" gesture used in any rehearsed performance (whether fully staged drama or *recitatio*). Cicero and Qunitilian argue that public speaking should fall in the former category of natural and spontaneous delivery. And yet, at the same time, they prescribe (in Quintilian's case in considerable detail) features of delivery meant to help the orator play himself: the straight posture, moderate pace, limited range

[44] Simo enters the stage giving orders "take it in; go away."

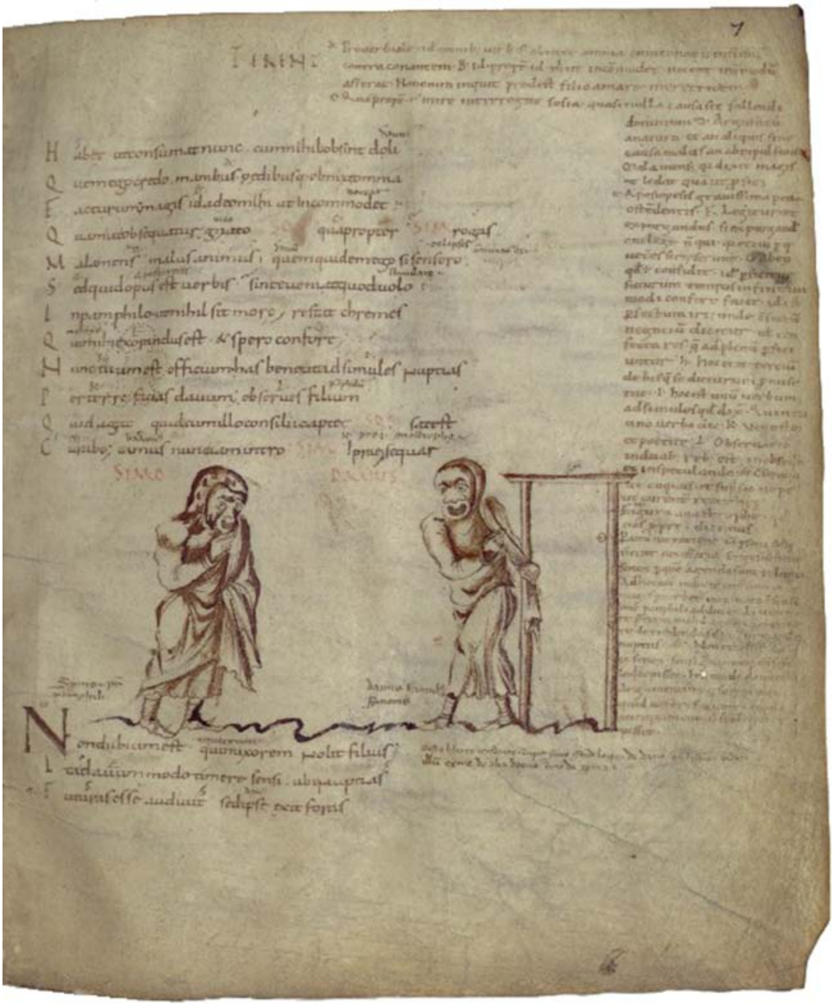

Plate 3. Parisinus Latinus 7899, folio 7, from left to right: Simo and Davus in the second scene of the *Andria*. Reprinted with the permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

of movements help create a specialized performance style designed to appear spontaneous and dignified. But one cannot program spontaneity. For all the emphasis on the essential difference between a citizen who speaks in his own *persona* and a professional actor, Quintilian's and Cicero's instruction on gesture underscores their awareness that rhetorical and theatrical delivery were closely akin and objectionably similar.

LUCIAN'S *ON DANCE* AND THE POETICS OF THE PANTOMIME MASK

A.K. Petrides

1. *Introduction*

This chapter will assess claims made about the pantomime mask by the character Lycinus in Lucian's *Περὶ ὀρχήσεως* (*On Dance*), still our most important written source on ancient pantomime.[1] The claims are made in the process of Lycinus' defending the novel art of pantomime against highbrow forms of performance (ἀκουσμάτων καὶ θεαμάτων σπουδαίων, *Salt.* 2, lines 17–18), solemn as they are in their antiquity (τοῖς παλαιοῖς συνεῖναι, *Salt.* 2, line 4) and unassailable in their privilege of being part of the official games (ἐναγώνιοι, *Salt.* 2, lines 21–22). Hence Lycinus construes the mask of pantomime as contrapuntal to the tragic mask of his day. Lycinus' statements, we shall see, are heavily informed by his paradoxical *classicization* of pantomime; consequently, they are ideologically refracted. To analyse Lycinus' discursive practices and to hold in mind the whimsical nature of this dialogue, in general, is of the essence, in order to sift through and qualify his claims. Nobody can deny, however, that from the crevices of Lucian's rhetoric consistently pour out more than glimpses of the contrasting perceptions of pantomime in the imperial period, as well as, on occasion, invaluable insights into the realities of pantomime performance. The dialogue's description of the material aspect of pantomime (masks, costume, etc.), at least, has been shown to be fairly accurate in its essentials.[2] The dialogue's evidentiary value,

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[1] Scholarship on pantomime has flourished in the last ten years. Four major books—Lada-Richards (2007), Garelli (2007), Hall & Wyles (2008), and Webb (2008b), the first two largely based on material published earlier in the decade by the authors—as well as a series of important articles, e.g. Montiglio (1999), Jory (2001) and (2004), Vesterinen (1997) and (2005), now complement, update, correct and synthesize the most fundamental earlier works of Robert (1930), Wüst (1949), Kokolakis (1959) and (1960), Rotolo (1957), and Jory (1981) and (1996). The work of W.J. Slater on various detailed issues of the history of pantomime has also been pivotal: see, for instance, W.J. Slater (1993), (1994) and (1995).

[2] On the pantomime mask, for instance, see Jory (1996) 18–19 and (2001); and Garelli (2007) 219–222. On costume, see Wyles (2008).

we shall argue, is not null. The main thesis of this chapter is that Lycinus' claims, and his juxtaposition of pantomime and tragic masks, can provide insights into the poetics of the former.

2. (*Un*)*Classical Genres*

"To conceive the essence of tragedy (οἵα ἐστίν)", Lycinus remarks (*Salt.* 27), "let us start from its external aspect (ἀπὸ τοῦ σχήματος), what an abhorrent and horrifying sight is a man who is artificially elongated (ἠσκημένος) to an inordinate (ἄρρυθμον) height, carries himself on high boots and wears a mask (πρόσωπον) that extends high above his head and has a vast gaping mouth, as if the actor is ready to swallow up the spectators!" Such risible excess, he suggests (*Salt.* 29), would be perfectly at home in *comic* performance, "because Comedy has always considered the ridiculousness of the masks themselves as part and parcel of her ability to please"; but, in the case of tragedy, it is symptomatic of the 'solecism' (σολοικίαν) that has led the royal genre of the classical past to degeneration. Lycinus rediscovers the abandoned nobility of tragedy in the mask of the pantomime (*Salt.* 29), which he construes as the diametrical opposite of the Imperial tragic mask: a "most beautiful" πρόσωπον of lifelike proportions (pantomime masks lacked ὄγκος, although our predominantly female specimens have ὄγκος-like hairdos), with an entirely closed mouth (συμμεμυκός), well in tune with the drama at play and in perfect harmony with the overall "seemliness" (κόσμιον) and "decorum" (εὐπρεπές) of the performer.

It is not just aesthetics, to be sure, that seems to be at stake in Lycinus' comparison: implied is a comparative analysis of performance, which perceives in manifestly dissimilar terms the respective function of the mask in the two genres under consideration. The visually commanding tragic mask dominates the stage, absorbs the spectator's gaze and sweeps the actor as a whole into a whirlwind of excess. On the one hand, the actor's disproportionate height necessitates an analogous engorgement of the body with pads for breast and stomach (προστερνίδια και προγαστρίδια, *Salt.* 27, lines 7–8). On the other hand, the actor's artless, spasmodic movements (ἑαυτὸν ἀνακλῶν καὶ κατακλῶν), and his uncouth, obnoxious cries (κεκραγώς, *Salt.* 27, line 11) constitute behaviour inappropriate both to the solemnity of the situation and the dignity of the represented character. It is immediately noticeable that Lycinus here sends back the language used by Craton *against* pantomime in paragraph 5, lines 13–14: the pantomime performer, Craton had said, is "a pernicious kind of man, who bends forwards and down for no apparent reason" (ὀλέθρῳ τινὶ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐς οὐδὲν δέον *κατακλωμένῳ*).

The mask of postclassical tragedy, Lycinus suggests, unnatural as it is, resizes every aspect of tragic acting way beyond scale. In stark contrast, pantomime performance incorporates the mask into a harmonious ensemble of signs and expressive devices. In pantomime there is good measure, ῥυθμός, and indeed order (κόσμιον, *Salt.* 29, line 4), as well as an organic connection between the mask and the drama at hand (τῷ ὑποκειμένῳ δράματι ἐοικός, 29). The result is beauty and decorum. Lycinus dexterously interweaves his aesthetic and moral principles, as of course Craton had done, the other way round. In pantomime, mask, costume, and primarily gesture, comportment, and dance are completely in synch; thus, the emerging spectacle, too, is a kind of ordered κόσμος. In tragedy, by contrast, the mask is the overbearing focal point, a part privileged at the expense of a unified whole. A sense of asymmetry and dislocation is inevitable, as the spectator of tragedy is drawn into the roaring excesses of mask and actor, and away from the essence of the drama.

The mask is the standard of comparison most dwelled upon by Lycinus as he contrasts tragedy and pantomime. It seems reasonable to conclude that Lycinus puts forth this uncouth mask of tragedy, with its outrageous expressiveness, as the cause rather than the effect of tragedy's tumble into melodrama and histrionics. The tragic mask conditions the performance. The pantomime mask, on the contrary, is minimalistic in the amount of information it projects, reluctant to register pathos, non-ostentatious and perfectly natural in size and proportions, and more enabling to the other parameters of the semiotic ensemble.

In order to understand fully the thrust of these claims, we need to place them in the context of Lycinus' overall defence of the pantomime. Lycinus' defensive strategies in *On Dance* are succinctly summarized by Ismene Lada-Richards as an attempt "to reposition pantomime on the cultural map by creating a complex network of affiliations to anchor it in the seas of high culture".[3] Against accusations of worthlessness, gender bending, riotous disorder and moral transgression,[4] Lycinus puts together a case for pantomime as a learned and educational spectacle with ample moral essence, superior to other institutions and rival entertainments, and addressed to a sophisticated and appreciative audience.[5] "The most sustained emancipation

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[3] Lada-Richards (2007) 96.

[4] On the long and contradictory history of thinking about and *with* pantomime, see Lada-Richards (2007) 104–151, and Lada-Richards (2008). See also Webb (2008b), *passim*. For a more general account of the anti-theatrical bias in western culture, see Theodorakopoulos (2003).

[5] Lada-Richards (2007) 79–97; Lada-Richards (2008) 298–304.

strategy employed by Lycinus," Lada-Richards notes, "is the building of strong bridges between pantomime and a range of disciplines, intellectual pursuits, and spheres of expertise, including history, rhetoric, philosophy, music and rhythm, and the plastic arts".[6] The pantomime's training is rigorous: it requires expertise in every conceivable discipline (*Salt.* 35), exceptional mental faculties and vast knowledge (*Salt.* 36). A "most harmonious affair" (παναρμόνιόν τι χρῆμα), pantomime dancing delights the senses, shapes character, and "sharpens the soul" (θήγουσα τὴν ψυχήν, *Salt.* 72). It is a form of rhetoric by visual means or a philosophy articulated by the hands, hence the well-deserved title χειρίσοφοι given to pantomimes (*Salt.* 69). Lycinus' pantomime is a pluralistic, all-encompassing show (ὁ δὲ ὀρχηστὴς τὰ πάντα ἔχει συλλαβών), comprising in a single performance all the mimetic modes, all the aesthetic pleasures and all the moral benefits of Craton's favourite genres (*Salt.* 68). This mixture of τὸ χρήσιμον and τὸ τερπνὸν in pantomime emblazons the message more effectively into the spectator's conscience (*Salt.* 71).

However, underlying all the above is another strategy, which needs to be added to Lada-Richard's list, but has not been noticed before, as far as I know. This strategy is ingrained in the semantics of Lycinus' discourse, equally cardinal and sustained, if implicit. Describing pantomime and its trappings in juxtaposition with postclassical tragedy, Lycinus is using a vocabulary whose cultural register elevates the younger and, in Craton's view, lesser genre to a position of superiority over σεμνὴ τραγῳδία. Ῥυθμός, κόσμος, ἁρμονία, composure and emotional restraint, measure and avoidance of excess, organic connection of the parts into a whole, beauty and decorum, exercise of mind, body and soul, pleasure and moral edification: all these are fundamental elements of the kind of Roman *classicism*, which emerged, like pantomime, κατὰ τὸν Σεβαστὸν μάλιστα.[7] In his attempt to upgrade pantomime, Lycinus does not confine himself to associating it with higher 'sister arts'. Above all, he takes the genre to be the embodiment of classical vigour, as opposed to postclassical deterioration.

The most conspicuous aspect of Lycinus' classicization of pantomime is the construction of the dancer's body as an incarnation of Polyclitus' famous Canon[8] (*Salt.* 75):

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[6] Lada-Richards (2008) 299. On the "fundamental affinity" of pantomime, rhetoric and art as constructed by Lycinus in *On Dance*, see Schlapbach (2008).

[7] The date most widely accepted for the beginning of imperial Pantomime is 23 BC: see Jory (1986) and (2004).

[8] On the Canon of Polyclitus, see e.g. Stewart (1978); Philipp (1990); Pollitt (1995); Borbein (1996).

> τὸ δὲ σῶμα κατὰ τὸν Πολυκλείτου κανόνα ἤδη ἐπιδείξειν μοι δοκῶ· μήτε γὰρ ὑψηλὸς ἄγαν ἔστω καὶ πέρα τοῦ μετρίου ἐπιμήκης μήτε ταπεινὸς καὶ νανώδης τὴν φύσιν, ἀλλ' ἔμμετρος ἀκριβῶς, οὔτε πολύσαρκος, ἀπίθανον γάρ, οὔτε λεπτὸς ἐς ὑπερβολήν· σκελετῶδες τοῦτο καὶ νεκρικόν.
>
> I think now it is time for me to show that [the pantomime's] body [should] conform to Polyclitus' Canon. The pantomime must be neither too tall nor exceedingly long-limbed nor very short and dwarfish in nature, but composed in exactly the right measure; neither extremely plump, for he would not be persuasive, nor overly skinny, because the latter quality reminds one of skeletons and reeks of death.

The pantomime's body, in short, needs to display the same harmonic composition and composure, the same μέτρον, as his mask. The body, more expansively, stands for the art itself.

The importance of Polyclitus' Canon for Augustan classicism is commonly known and was expressly promoted already in Antiquity.[9] The Canon, and its most distinguished specimen, the Doryphoros, had after all been clearly quoted in the famous statue of Augustus himself at Prima Porta. The Doryphoric type, writes J. Pollini, was seen as "a metaphor of masculine beauty and moral purity and strength". These virtues are also connected with the concept of ideal youth, one of the cornerstones of Augustan classicism in art and literature, "an expression of Augustus' conscious effort to renew state and society". Furthermore, "undoubtedly contributing to the Roman interest in Polykleitan works were the order and unity inherent in the ideal or 'perfect' *schema* of the *Canon*."[10] Unity and order were the ideological staples of the Principate. According to Lycinus, unity and order are the foundations of pantomime, as well. Typically overstating his case, Lycinus even goes as far as to suggest that the pantomime unifies the three parts of Plato's soul (*Salt.* 70): the θυμικόν, when it enacts an irate character; the ἐπιθυμητικόν, when it represents lovers; and the λογιστικόν, as it bridles each different passion.

The tragic actor, in contrast, has a fairly straightforward job to do, for Lycinus, as "everything has been taken care of by the poets, who lived a long time ago". He himself is only responsible for his own voice, i.e., to deliver

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9 The corpus of references to Polyclitus in Roman literature is collected and commented upon by Neumeister (1990). On Augustan classicism, see most importantly Elsner (2006) with earlier bibliography. On the impact of Polyclitus on Augustan classicism see Zanker (1978); Pollitt (1978); Maderna-Lauter (1990); Lahusen (1990) 376–385. On Augustus and pantomime, see also Hunt (2008).

10 Pollini (1995). All quotations are from p. 268.

the text in a respectful and apposite manner. Yet he manages to botch up even this notionally simple task by trivialising the whole thing (*Salt.* 27, lines 13–15). This reference to the poets of old is significant, as it affords Lycinus' view of tragedy the perspective of time. I think there is ample room to argue that Lycinus' construction of pantomime does not rest on a binary opposition of pantomime and tragedy in an absolute, achronic sense, but pivots on a triangular schema: synchronically, the pantomime interfaces with the tragedy of his day; however, the spectral vision of *classical* tragedy dominates the scene as the *tertium comparationis* and the absolute guarantor of value. Postclassical tragedy squanders its great patrimony, because it lacks a sense of what is the appropriate mode of rendering the texts it has inherited. Pantomime is dealing with the same stories as tragedy; nevertheless, not only is it more varied and learned and exciting in treating them (*Salt.* 31), but also, in delivering them, it carries on the spirit of classical tragedy, the kind of σεμνότης which its postclassical offspring has relinquished.

This classicization of pantomime is Lycinus' strongest discursive gesture in the dialogue, constructed deliberately as an oxymoron: the traditional genre (tragedy) has been upstaged by a younger genre, which emerged under Augustus' reign, but it resumes the classical ideal of beauty, symmetry, balance and perfection. It can hardly be accidental that Lycinus underlines the synchrony of the two phenomena, the reign of Augustus and the rise of pantomime. Pantomime, ἡ νῦν ὄρχησις, may have been a relatively modern invention (νεώτερον ... ἐπιτήδευμα, *Salt.* 7, line 4–5), but it had ancient roots,[11] and it was built on classical principles at a time of generalised cultural renegotiation.

With a sleight of hand, Lycinus conjures not simply an argument for canonising pantomime but, more importantly, an ideological counterpoint to his interlocutor's cultural and political elitism. Lycinus' pantomime returns to a classical mode of performance predicated on symmetry, balance and rhythm, attributes which tragedy apparently once possessed but now has abandoned. This is a classicizing construction, no doubt, premised on Imperial schematisations. As far as tragedy is concerned, after all, any perceptions about its classical mode of performance in the imperial period would necessarily be a reader's hunch.[12] It is very doubtful whether even any

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11 There is, of course, a tremendous (and slightly comical) amount of special pleading in Lycinus' genealogy of pantomime (*Salt.* 7–25), but the rhetorical point is clinched irrespective of the accuracy of detail. On the actual origins of pantomime, see Garelli (2007) 25–91.

12 On Lucian and the tragic performances of his time see Kokolakis (1960).

illustrations of fifth-century tragedy were available in Lucian's time. Lycinus has a vested interest in adorning pantomime with the insignia of the classical, to offset the genre's shortcomings in antiquity and agonistic status—and he does so in the most emphatic way possible. Interestingly, however, Lycinus' schema is neither baseless nor devoid of some historical utility.

3. *"Expressive" and Other Masks*

Let us now examine Lycinus' basic assertions one by one beginning with the most overt of them, namely that the 'expressive mask' of postclassical tragedy, as opposed to that of pantomime, was a dominant and domineering sign in performance. First of all, Lycinus' portrayal of the mask as a physical object, even if rhetorically inflated, is accurate (no surprises there, as tragedy was still being widely performed in Lucian's time). Archaeological evidence corroborates the claim that by the second century AD tragedy had indeed developed such a voluminous mask and a correspondingly overstated costume as Lycinus suggests.[13] This was the final stage of an evolution initiated at the end of the fifth century by the introduction of the ὄγκος, a lamda-shaped extension over the forehead.[14]

It is also a fact that the mask of postclassical tragedy was not simply oversized. It went through a significant change in outlook compared to its classical antecedent, as the mask maker started sculpting the turbulent emotions of the characters on the mask itself.[15] The *communis opinio* that postclassical tragedy grew exponentially more rhetorical and sentimental, although logical and probable, eventually rests only on an inevitably 'creative' and oftentimes circular reading of surviving fragments and *testimonia*. By contrast, however, there is little doubt that as time went by the mask was ever more warmly embracing pathos as a matrix for the sculptor.

Lycinus is historically correct in another, third point. Expressive masks like those of postclassical drama (the mask of New Comedy evolved along similar lines) became inevitably the focal point of the actor's body on stage. The

13 See, for instance, Green (1994) 158, fig. 6.10, an ivory figurine from Paris (Petit Palais, inv. A DUT 192). The tragic character of the figurine with his high-platform shoes and his elongated mask comes very close to Lycinus' description.

14 On the ὄγκος and its possible semiotic significance see Petrides (2010) 116. For the masks of Hellenistic drama, see Bernabò Brea (1998) and (2001), with excellent illustrations of finds from Lipari.

15 See, for instance, Bernabò Brea (1998), fig. 7, 12, 13, 20, 27–30 etc.

mask's expressiveness was not mere show; its overall physiognomy was also a significant visual clue for the character's inclination towards virtue or vice. As physiognomical theories became ever more dominant in Hellenistic and Imperial times,[16] the exterior of the mask was understood to provide entrance to the interior of the character: the σχῆμα was ticket to the τρόπος or ἦθος. Physiognomics was not, of course, a clear-cut way to approach any character or any mask; it emitted an intriguing set of visual signs, which played out dynamically in the course of the action. Physiognomics semiotized the facial features of the mask. There is much to be 'read' now on the postclassical mask; much that necessarily channels the gaze of the spectator up towards the head.[17] So much importance attached to the visual connotation of ethos and pathos through the mask that it automatically established a different model of interaction between body, word (verbal signs) and 'face' in the acting: body and word now draw attention to the πρόσωπον, not vice versa. The focus has been dragged upwards.

As far as the scant surviving illustrations allow us to discern,[18] the mask of classical tragedy was wrought in quite a different mode.[19] First of all, it was of natural proportions (no ὄγκος until very late in the fifth century), and of naturalistic countenance. Most importantly it was apparently as expressionless, or of a nonspecific expression, as the faces on the friezes of the temple of Zeus at Olympia or on the Parthenon. This lack of facial expression on the classical tragic mask is of monumental significance for the art of the actor and the overall semiotics of performance. Classical tragedy registers a stony, seemingly apathetic face, which, however, is in fact endowed, like the pantomime's body, with a protean ability to transform and to express a large spectrum of emotions. To illustrate this adaptability of the classical mask of

[16] On Physiognomics in imperial times and especially in the period of the Second Sophistic see especially, in a bibliography that piles up fast, Barton (1994), Gleason (1995) and Swain (2007).

[17] For a more detailed discussion of this process of semiotization in postclassical theatre, see Petrides (2010).

[18] Wiles (2007) 15–43 provides good illustrations of some of the most famous depictions of classical tragic masks on vase paintings along with a discussion of the evidence mainly from the theatre anthropologist's point of view.

[19] There have been many interesting, yet widely dissenting studies of the classical tragic mask. To name but the most recent: Marshall (1999) summarises the fundamental masking conventions obtaining in the fifth-century; Halliwell (1993) regards the mask as a secular, theatrical object; whereas Wiles (2007), in the spirit of modern performance studies, theatre anthropology and French structuralism, makes the contrary case for re-introducing Dionysiac mystification into our understanding of the fifth-century mask. Closer to Wiles are Frontisi-Ducroux (1995) and Calame (1995) 97–136 and (2005) 185–211.

tragedy, David Wiles has evoked a modern analogue, namely the 'neutral' mask developed by 20th-century actors and directors Michel Saint-Denis and Jacques Lecoq.[20] The 'neutral' mask is, in Jacques Lecoq's famous phrase, "un visage [...] en équilibre, [qui] doit servir à ressentir l'état de neutralité préalable à l'action, un état de réceptivité à ce qui nous environne, sans conflit intérieur".[21] Other similar experiments,[22] as well as comparative studies on the practices of Noh theatre, support Lecoq's findings.[23] The expressionless or 'neutral' mask, far from being a liability or a drawback, was actually an advantage. Its emotional gamut is paradoxically much more diverse than that of the expressive mask. The neutral mask becomes a blank canvas, a space waiting to be filled. Emotion is not to be served to the spectator through a sculpted grimace. It is to be inscribed on the mask by the actor and the spectator. The actor's body, his movements and gestures, the verbal signs he emits imprint pathos on the mask. The focal point of such acting is not the 'face', but the body which provides depth to the face. The expressionless mask configures the actor's body into a balanced, egalitarian system of signifiers, with the emphasis, though, still remaining determinedly on the body.[24]

What about pantomime, then? Let us have a look at the images on pp. 448–450. *Figure 1* shows a mask of postclassical tragedy. *Figures 2* and *3* are specimens of pantomime masks. *Figures 4* and *5* depict masks of classical tragedy. The first thing that jumps to the eye is that, as a rule, pantomime masks are indeed as starkly different from those of postclassical tragedy as Lycinus proposes. They are indeed lifelike and naturalistic both in their proportions and in their depiction of the features of the human face. There is no evidence that the masks of pantomime were physiognomically encoded. They are neither strongly individualised nor elaborately typed, although some general types can be discerned.[25] Compared to masks of postclassical tragedy, masks of pantomime can be fairly said to show no expression at all (in some specimens the eyebrows seem slightly arched, but this hardly

20 Wiles (2000), 147–153.
21 Lecoq (1997) 47.
22 For some of these experiments, see Wiles (2004) and (2007).
23 See, e.g. Johnson (1992), with the comment on p. 25: "... we realize the great ingenuity and functionality of the neutral, nonspecific expression of the Noh mask: it allows the performer to conjure the greatest range of emotions through the *omote* [i.e. an archaic Japanese word meaning 'face' and 'mask'] by becoming an evocative, nonspecific instrument for the spectator's imagination".
24 Varakis (2010) 25 reaches similar conclusions as she compares Classical and Hellenistic masks of comedy. On the matter see also Wiles (2008).
25 Jory (2001).

registers). In fact, all the above suggests that the further the pantomime mask distances itself from that of postclassical tragedy the closer it seems to come (to return?) to the classical tragic mask. Even the shut mouth of the pantomime is much closer to the apparently moderate orifice of the classical mask than to the more exaggerated openings of contemporary tragic specimens. The pantomime mask, too, I argue, has a good claim to being perceived as 'neutral'.

How can one explain this phenomenon? Is Lycinus right? Did pantomime indeed revert to the aesthetics of classical tragedy? A first answer must be that, if it did so, it was surely not in any conscious and straightforward way. We could believe, of course, that a genre developed under the aegis of Augustus displayed conscious conservatism in iconographic terms. After all, the tragic and comic ornamental masks at the gates of the Theatre of Marcellus in Rome did show the same kind of conservatism (they reflect early rather than late Hellenistic types of masks).[26] It is perhaps also possible that generic antagonism with tragedy urged pantomime to differentiate his visual aspect as clearly as possible from that of its rival. However, as far as I know there is no clear evidence other than Lycinus' rhetorical constructions in *On Dance* suggesting that pantomime as a genre had a classicizing agenda.[27] This eulogistic classicization of pantomime may well be put forth by Lucian as an equally extreme counterweight to the diatribes against the genre. Nevertheless, we must not gloss over the visual similarities between pantomime and classical tragic masks as if they were a mirage or simple coincidence. They may well point to useful parallelisms in the function of the mask. To my mind, we are in the range of strong probability suggesting that pantomime and classical tragedy, independently of each other, generated a comparable kind of mask as they looked to cater to similar semiotic needs in performance. In pantomime, the process is more likely to have been intra-generic than the result of external pressures. It was a matter of poetics, not polemics or ideology.

In fact, any mask other than one of the 'neutral' kind would be unfit for pantomime, redundant and even distracting from the crux of the performance: that is, the pantomime's ability to impersonate the ἦθος and πάθος (*Salt.* 67) of a number of characters in sequence (five, more or less, as it

26 See Green (1994) 143, with bibliography.

27 Libanius' program, for instance, is not to prove that pantomime was *superior* to tragedy in essence, but that it was its natural and equal successor as educator of the masses. See Libanius, *Or.* 64.112, with Montiglio (1999) 265.

appears), purely by way of bodily movement, gesture and dance and with the absolute minimum of representational appurtenances. The pantomime performer was judged on his knack for bending his body in such a way that it remoulded itself into a diversity of forms, thereby enacting a narrative. We have it on good authority that the scarf (*pallium*) which accompanied the dancer's ankle-length robe could be used for creating various σχήματα during the dance.[28] The dancer could also sometimes use props, as well,[29] but this is as far as he would go by way of using external means to create meaning. "In terms of external equipment and accoutrements", Ruth Webb notes, "the pantomime was minimalist. The effect was created almost entirely by the dancer's skills and, crucially, his interaction with the audience's knowledge of the stories and characters he represented. To achieve his effect, the dancer needed to prompt the spectators to contribute imaginatively to the creation of the scenario as a whole, imagining settings and even other characters".[30] Costume, masks and props were ancillary accessories rather than indispensable prerequisites of the pantomime's art. The masks in particular were certainly a plus in large-venue performances. They further contributed atmosphere and *gravitas*, even a sense of mystique to the dance. But their semiotic value was little and they were certainly far from self-standing or even foregrounded signs.[31]

An unnamed, but apparently illustrious pantomime performer living in the times of Nero proved this point to the sceptical Cynic philosopher Demetrios (*Salt.* 73). Demetrios disparagingly considered the dancer himself a πάρεργον, a side-act, to the magnificent visual elements of the performance: the choral song, the music of the wind and percussion instruments, the silk garments and of course the εὐπρεπὲς προσωπεῖον. It was all these, to his mind, that "decorated" (κοσμεῖσθαι) the art of the pantomime, not the dancing, which itself it was pointless (μηδὲν ὄν). In response to this criticism, the anonymous pantomime performer ordered all accompaniments to silence[32]

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[28] Fronto, *Ad M. Antoninum de Orationibus* 5: *Ut histriones, quom palliolatim saltant caudam cycni, capillum Veneris, Furiae flagellum, eodem pallio demonstrant* […].

[29] Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 2.7.17, records that Pylades once, while miming *Hercules Furens*, even shot arrows to the audience, among whom was Augustus himself.

[30] Webb (2008a) 47.

[31] Some scholars even suggest that changing masks in the course of the performance may have been common in the canonical form of the genre, but may not have been obligatory in modified versions of it, such as performances in dinner parties, etc.: see Rotolo (1957) 5; Webb (2008a) 48. The theory presupposes, evidently, a kind of generic pantomime mask in accordance with the generic costume.

[32] Of course, an experienced spectator of pantomime would know what Libanius, *Or.* 64.113,

and then danced on his own devices (αὐτὸς ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ) the story of Ares and Aphrodite's adultery. The effect was so impressive that the Cynic cried: "I can *hear*, man, not only *see* what you are doing! You give me the impression of talking with your very hands!" It is not clear whether αὐτὸς ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ implies that the pantomime disposed of costume and mask as well in this epideictic performance, but it seems to be implied.[33] Anyway, the moral of the story is that no paraphernalia were absolutely indispensable in pantomime performance. The fancy of a 'bare' pantomime is, of course just as much of a rhetorical device as a tragedy doing away with actors and competitive festivals altogether (Aristotle, *Poetics* 1450b16–20), but both these texts show how hierarchies of signs can be constructed either in performance practice or on the prescription pad of a theoretician.

That the mask on its own did not have even the minimum representational purchase is clearly suggested in another anecdote recounted by Lycinus (*Salt.* 76). This is the story of a performance gone awry. In the story, although the chorus had apparently announced that Hector was the character to be mimed next, the mask itself was clearly insufficient to denote "Hector" in any meaningful iconographic way or in any physiognomical fashion suggestive of his ἦθος. Nor was that the point: the *body* was the point. The inconspicuous mask and costume[34] immediately shifted the glance to the performer's small stature, and this is where it all went wrong: the audience were seeing Astyanax, not his father! The anecdote, which refers explicitly to Antioch, the seat of Lucius Verus' indulgence in the spectacles and the only city mentioned by name in *On Dance*, may well be genuine. At the same time, however, it recalls a number of similar stories, in which a pantomime is faulted for elements of his performance. Some of these stories have the great Pylades himself as the protagonist.[35] One suspects that at least one of the purposes of

points out: that the dance figures of the pantomime are so absorbing during the performance that it is as if the voice of the chorus has been silenced altogether, even if it is there.

[33] It is certainly implied in Plutarch, *Moralia* 711e7–f2, in a context comparing the two different versions of pantomime developed by Pylades and Bathyllus. After having disqualified tragedy from the symposium altogether, because it "is contriving (σκευωρεῖσθαι) too many dramatic effects in putting on pathetic and pitiful stories", the character Diogenianos proceeds: ἀποπέμπω δὲ τῆς ὀρχήσεως τὴν Πυλάδειον, ὀγκώδη καὶ παθητικὴν καὶ πολυπρόσωπον οὖσαν· αἰδοῖ δὲ τῶν ἐγκωμίων ἐκείνων, ἃ Σωκράτης περὶ ὀρχήσεως διῆλθε, δέχομαι τὴν Βαθύλλειον αὐτόθεν πέζαν τοῦ κόρδακος ἀπτομένην, Ἠχοῦς ἤ τινος Πανὸς ἢ Σατύρου σὺν Ἔρωτι κωμάζοντος ὑπόρχημά τι διατιθεμένην. Minar translates the difficult underlined phrase aptly as "a straightforward unaccompanied dance".

[34] It is a fair inference that the dancer did not change costumes as the characters alternated in the performance: see Wyles (2008) 70.

[35] Cf. e.g. Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 2.7.12–15.

such stories, beyond the fact that anecdotes are intrinsically interesting, could have been to caution trainee dancers against common errors. The *caveat* here would be clearly that the neutral mask's substantial input is constructed *by* the spectators as part of a whole cluster of signifiers holistically interpreted, rather than dished up *to* them by a semiotized, dominant mask.

It transpires, therefore, that Lycinus may well be hitting upon the truth arguing that the mask of pantomime was diluted into a harmonious symphony of collaborating signs rather than being promoted as a (cacophonous) star act. The neutral mask has all the characteristics and semiotic properties that pantomime required. It has, as we said, the ability to act as a pointer to other signifiers in the performance, to reflect the gaze elsewhere, to the signs that are most crucial to the art. It bears nothing but the most generic information; hence it is open to being 'written upon'. It is the kind of mask that can accentuate the body of the performer most boldly, as it stands out only for its ability to integrate itself into the whole.

4. *Conclusion*

The problems dogging the interpretation of Lucian's *Περὶ ὀρχήσεως* (*On Dance*) are well known to scholars. Some have been overcome (such as issues of authenticity and dating);[36] others, more profound, persist. Questions of voice[37] and framing, as well as of authorial intention, are the most consequential among the latter. We are not certain of its purpose, either, if it had any beyond *epideixis*. *On Dance* is certainly too layered to be read as a straightforward *Gelegenheitspamphlet* looking to ingratiate Lucian with the pantomime-enthusiast emperor Lucius Verus.[38] It is also neither a Platonic dialogue nor a systematic treatise such as Aristotle's *Poetics*, even if we are certainly not dealing with such blatantly ironic essays, as glorifying the "art" of the parasite or the encomium of a fly. One can debate endlessly whether *On Dance* puts forth any kind of thesis at all, even a light-hearted one;[39] or whether it is in fact a tongue-in-cheek exploration of two extreme discourses

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36 On authenticity, see Anderson (1977). On the dialogue's date, see Kokolakis (1959) 3–7.

37 On the notorious difficulties encountered in pinning down Lucian's own voice in his works, see among many others Branham (1989) and Whitmarsh (2001) 247–294.

38 This is an old view of Robert's (1930, 122), revived by Jones (1986) 68, but generally discredited.

39 This is, more or less, Lada-Richard's view, more concisely expressed in Lada-Richards (2008) 298–304.

on the same topic: one pro-pantomime (Lycinus') and another contra (Craton's).[40] Personally, I tend towards the latter position. Lycinus' reasoning is certainly so full of holes and lapses of logic, and some of his arguments are so hyperbolic and specious (including the significance attached to pantomime itself in the context of imperial culture and education) that they give a strong impression of a conscious authorial attempt to test the boundaries of rhetorical reasoning itself.[41] The stronger impression *On Dance* gives is, granted the pun, of a sophisticated exercise in sophistic argumentation, which needs to be examined within its own discursive margins rather than treated as an authentic defence of pantomime, let alone as a rigorous attempt to describe accurately and reliably the genre in question. One would concur with M.-H. Garelli: "Lucien joue habilement sur une ambiguïté fondamentale",[42] the ambiguous ability of pantomime to elicit zealous reactions of pique and fascination. Lucian embarks on a somewhat jocose exploration of the extent in which the language used against pantomime can be turned on its head, with a view eventually to upholding and valorising the 'lesser' genre. To evoke but one final example: if Craton could use the Siren as an emblem of pantomime's insidious allure, Lycinus pronounced enchantment (*κήλησις*) "through both the eyes and the ears" (*Salt.* 72) to be the supreme method of educating the spectator.

However, I hope that the preceding discussion has convinced the reader that the dialogue's value as a document of theatre history is to be qualified, but not discredited. Lucian operates within a socio-political milieu well-versed in both pantomime and tragedy. Furthermore, Lycinus' basic arguments concerning the differences between the masks of pantomime and postclassical tragedy can be verified by hard external evidence. Invested as Lycinus may be in his attempt to classicize pantomime, still his rhetoric, like any rhetoric, may disguise fragments of usable and useful fact. Such a fact is, I maintained, that the mask of pantomime is another instantiation

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40 Scholars used to surmise that Craton was a stand-in for a famous detractor of pantomime, the sophist Aelius Aristides; see Kokolakis (1959) 9–10. The view that Lucian is "responding" directly to Aristides here or in *Nigrinus* or elsewhere, in the manner that Libanius' *Oratio 64* was explicitly such a response, has been abandoned.

41 Cf. for instance the argument that pantomime was not made part of the competitions (ἐναγώνιος) because it was too good for the games (*Salt.* 32), or that Proteus was actually a mimetic dancer, whom myth transformed into a creature with actual metamorphic abilities (*Salt.* 19)—a playful way to turn a familiar metaphor (cf. Lib. *Or.* 64.117) into usable fact! On Proteus as a metaphor for the performer, see Webb (2005) and Lada-Richards (2007) 96–97, for other flaws in Lycinus' line of argument.

42 Garelli (2007) 266.

of the 'neutral' kind of mask in antiquity, akin but not directly related to the mask of classical tragedy, and sharply contrasted with the postclassical tragic mask.

That the pantomime mask bears a superficial physical resemblance to the mask of classical tragedy, as much as it distinguishes itself sharply from its postclassical development, seems to be a demonstrable fact. For sure, it does not seem likely that pantomime programmatically wished to return to classical values and ideals, as Lycinus' classicizing construction of the genre suggests. Theatrical *σκεύη* are first and foremost practical tools, not rhetorical weapons. In the same time, however, theatrical *σκεύη* mould to the semiotic requirements of performance. This must be all the more so in genres such as pantomime, which are wont to economise on the use of representational contraptions of any physical kind. I tried to show that the 'neutral' kind of mask is ideally suited for pantomime.

Therefore, to my mind, the safest conclusion is the following. Any similarity in the outlook of the masks of classical tragedy and pantomime must have been the result of the two genres reaching similar sculptural solutions while looking to satisfy comparable semiotic needs. Pantomime developed a 'neutral' mask of its own, akin in function to the 'neutral' mask of classical tragedy but not genealogically related to- or formed under any immediate influence from classical tragedy. The reason was, I suggested, that pantomime performance required an ensemble of signifiers with the focus thrown on the body rather than on the face. The latter, foregrounding the face, was the effect of the expressive mask of postclassical tragedy. That pantomime deliberately shied away from this effect in an attempt to improve on the great rival genre is something that Lycinus seems to imply as he tries to bestow classical splendour and authority upon pantomime. We obviously need to take this claim with a pinch of salt. Anyhow, the pantomime mask, 'neutral' as it was, was undoubtedly decorous enough to invest the pantomime's routine with *gravitas* and aesthetic appeal. It was also minimally representational as to facilitate audience awareness of character change (especially as such change seems to have structured the 'plot', as well), but not so overly conspicuous as to distract the viewer from the 'master sign' of the performance, that is, the dancing body of the performer. Lucian's *On Dance*, therefore, rhetorical as it may be, can allow us to form an idea of the poetics of the pantomime mask.

Figure 1. Marble female tragic mask from Athens. Possibly late Hellenistic. Agora Museum S 1144. American School of Classical Studies in Athens: Agora Excavations.

Figure 2. Marble pantomime mask from Athens. Third century AD. Agora Museum T1818. American School of Classical Studies in Athens: Agora Excavations.

Figure 3. Marble pantomime mask from Athens. Third century AD. Agora Museum T1086. American School of Classical Studies in Athens: Agora Excavations.

Figure 4. Female tragic mask on an Attic oinochoe (c. 470 BC). Agora Museum P11810. American School of Classical Studies in Athens: Agora Excavations.

Figure 5. Female tragic chorus mask on a crater from Tarentum. Early fourth century. Martin von Wagner Museum Würzburg, Antiken Abteilung, Fragment H 4781.

PANTOMIME: VISUALISING MYTH IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Edith Hall

One of the most important media through which the inhabitants of the Roman Empire had access to the canonical stories which had first been dramatised at Athens in the fifth century BCE was in the performance of pantomimes, serious balletic narratives in which all (*panta*) the important roles were mimed by a silent male solo dancer. When recently writing the introduction to the first collection of essays entirely devoted to this art form, *New Directions in Ancient Pantomime*,[1] it struck me that much of the important testimony which needed to be put together as contextualising material had previously remained almost completely unfamiliar to most scholars of ancient drama, and has usually been given only a perfunctory treatment even in histories of ancient entertainment. The present volume offers an ideal vehicle for introducing theatre historians as well as classicists to the new developments in our understanding of this intriguing medium, and to that end I here offer an adapted and condensed version of that introductory essay.

The pantomime dancer was accompanied by music and the words of the "libretto", which was performed by singers and sometimes a speaking actor or herald. But it was the dancer's skill in communicating through movement and gesture, and in transforming himself from one role to another assisted by little more than a change of mask, which thrilled antiquity's enthusiastic pantomime fans. This glamorous medium of entertainment, where the text was subordinated to the visual language, was regarded by many educated people in antiquity as vulgar and degenerate;[2] their prejudices were inherited by classical scholars, who until recently almost ignored pantomime, except for its role in Roman politics. For young aristocratic males of the equestrian class seem to have been particularly intimate with pantomime dancers, and to have found a way of expressing dissent

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1 Hall and Wyles 2008.

2 One of the editors suggests to me that this prejudice may ultimately go back to Aristotle, or his contemporary critics of tragic *mimesis*; cf. *Poet.* ch. 26, 1461b28–29 λίαν δῆλον ὅτι ἡ ἅπαντα μιμουμένη φορτική.

and dissatisfaction with the emperor's authority through such decadent associations.[3] In 15 CE Tiberius attempted to control the amount of money spent on public shows as well as the violent conflicts between the fans of rival pantomime dancers (Tacitus, *Annals* 1.77.4). By the fourth century CE, the partisan groups that supported particular theatrical performers had developed a loud political voice, and were able, by chanting slogans in the theatre, to exert considerable demagogic and political influence. As part of mainstream Roman political history, this aspect of pantomime has been relatively well investigated.[4]

The medium's nature as a performance genre has fared less well. This is partly because the evidence is so patchy and diverse; there are hardly any certain visual images and no undisputed example of a pantomime libretto. The explicit surviving testimony is troublesome: it mainly consists of two rhetorically tendentious treatises by defenders of the medium (Lucian and Libanius),[5] biased condemnations by moralists and church fathers, and some rather uninformative inscriptions and short poems. Yet an effort to understand this late chapter in the history of ancient theatre performance is rendered indispensable by the extent of its impact on ancient culture. Until well after the triumph of Christianity, pantomime dancers performed in every corner of the Roman Empire, from at least as early as the second decade of the first century BCE, when a reference to a *pantomimos* first appears in an inscription from Priene in south-west Asia Minor.[6]

The formal conditions under which the pantomime dancers performed could vary enormously. They were sometimes joined by an assistant actor, or groups of dancers of either sex. They could dance to the accompaniment of a large orchestra and choir, or a single musical instrument and a narrator or solo singer. The tone of the performances could vary from danced drama on high-minded tragic themes, to stagings of quaint Arcadian adventures involving Pan and satyrs, to risqué semi-pornographic masque. Ancient polemicists and even medical writers certainly suggest that pantomime dancers could arouse strong sexual responses; the Pergamene doctor Galen prided himself on the case of Justus' wife, from whose pulse he had been able to diagnose not illness but her infatuation with a pantomime dancer named Pylades (*On Precognition* 14.630.15; see also Juvenal, *Satire* 6.66).

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3 W.J. Slater 1994; Edwards 1997; Lada-Richards (2007) 57–61.

4 Jory 1984; W.J. Slater 1994; Browning 1952; Cameron 1976, especially 193–229, 16–17.

5 For an excellent study of Lucian's *De saltante*, see Lada-Richards 2007.

6 *IP* 113.66; see Robert (1930) 114–115 and Jones (1991) 195–196.

Yet at the heart of all pantomime performance was the notion that a story could be told through a dancer's silent, rhythmical movements, poses and gestures. The author of a late Latin poem expressed succinctly what was special about this type of performer:

> He fights, he plays, he loves, he revels, he turns round, he stands still, he illuminates the truth, and imbues everything with grace. He has as many tongues as limbs, so wonderful is the art by which he can make his joints speak although his mouth is silent.[7]

Since the stories that were told in pantomimes were often drawn from the tragic repertoire, and pantomime shared other features with the venerable conventions of tragic theatre, its practitioners sometimes used of themselves the label 'actor of tragic rhythmical movement' (τραγικῆς ἐρρύθμου κινήσεως ὑποκριτής). The term is found, for example, on a Delphi inscription of the late second or early third centuries CE, attached to the statue of a pantomime named dancer Apolaustos.[8] The inscription, which originally accompanied a statue of this superstar, recorded some of the highlights in his glittering career. He had travelled all over Greece and the Hellenised East, winning victory in festival competitions in any city worthy of the name. Rewarded at each with a portfolio of honours—cash prizes, honorary citizenship or membership of the council, a coveted priesthood, a statue, an honorific inscription—this artist was felt to be one of the best travelled and most illustrious individuals of the day.[9]

Although Galen saw the proliferation of statues of dancers as a sign that the world had forgotten about the value of hard work (*On Precognition* 14.599–605), Apolaustos' professional tours look more demanding even than those undertaken by the modern stars of opera, ballet, or rock music. But itinerant pantomime celebrities were certainly not a feature exclusive to the Greek East and Italy. More than a century after Apolaustos, a theatregoer in Arausio (Orange) in southern France, the location of an impressive Roman theatre adorned with a statue of Augustus, wore a terracotta medallion declaring that he was a fan of the dancer Parthenopaeus.[10] This dancer must have travelled the theatres of Gaul competing, with the help of his assistant, to the sound of a portable water organ (*Fig. 1*).

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7 *Latin Anthology* 100.7–10, ed. Shackleton-Bailey (1982) 88–89; translation by the author.

8 *Fouilles de Delphes* iii.1.551.

9 See W.J. Slater 1995.

10 The medallion, manufactured and found at Orange, is now in the museum at Saint-Germain (cat. no. 31673). For a discussion, see Perrot (1971) 93.

Figure 1. Appliqué medallion from Orange. Late 2nd or early 3rd c. St.-Germain-en-Laye, Musée des Antiquités Nationales 31673.

Pantomime represents a lost aesthetic of profound and widespread influence, similar to the missing link in Roman literary history that Fantham influentially argued two decades ago was constituted by the allied medium of mime.[11] Pantomime became "Romanised" and culturally significant in Italy under Augustus, as contemporary authors attest. They are also witness to the huge popularity of pantomime. The rhetoric surrounding it, whether in the mouths of its advocates or denigrators, is always one of spellbinding *pleasure*: the highly trained, muscular dancer spoke eloquently to his audiences "through the enchanting (θελξίφρονα) trembling of his palm" (*Greek Anthology*

[11] Fantham 1989.

9.505.17). This dance idiom, with its elaborate gestures and detailed imitation of the passions, conditioned and reflected other types of cultural practice and discourse, from rhetorical declamation to epic poetry, from the visual and decorative arts to philosophy, love poetry and prose fiction.[12]

Quantitatively speaking, pantomime played a more important role in educating the majority of inhabitants of the Roman empire in mythology than, for example, recitations of poetry. Libanius makes this explicit: pantomime is "a form of instruction for the masses (διδαχήν τινα τοῖς πλήθεσι) about the deeds of the ancients," and its broad social appeal is expressed in his images of the humble goldsmith educated in myths, and the slave who sings songs from the pantomimes as he runs errands in the market-place (*Or.* 64.112). Most work on pantomime has tended to focus on the infatuation of Roman upper classes with the medium under the Julio-Claudian and Flavian Emperors, but pantomime transcended all class boundaries: Seneca wrote in a letter that the clamour and applause of the common people did honour to the pantomime dancers (*Ep.* 29.12). It is not just that the medium seems to have penetrated every corner of ancient life, at least if we are to believe Dio Chrysostom when he says that pantomime dancers performed in the streets, and even offered lessons there, taking no notice of the vendors and street brawls around them (*Or.* 20.9). It is not even just that pantomime enjoyed an astonishingly long *floruit*, since the successive attempts by Christian Emperors to ban dancing across the empire proved ineffective in some cities; Byzantine versions of pantomime can be identified as late as the middle of the 7th century CE.[13] It is even more important that it was performed over such a wide geographical area.

The textual evidence is particularly disappointing when it is contrasted with the scale of activity implied by the sheer number of theatres that were in use across the vast regions covered by the Roman Empire. We know of one hundred and seventy five theatres in Italy and Sicily, and considerably more than that have been found in the provinces, from Lisbon (Olisipo) in the west and Catterick (in the northern part of the British county of Yorkshire) in the north to Comana in Cappadocia. No fewer than fifty-three theatres are attested for one of the six North African provinces—Africa Proconsularis—alone.[14] Entertainers travelled immense distances to perform for audiences

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12 See Garelli 2007 and the essays by Huskinson, Lada-Richards, Schlapbach, and May in Hall and Wyles 2008.

13 See Puchner 1997 and 2002; Lada-Richards (2007) 22–25.

14 Sear (2006) 103.

of quite different ethnicities: witness, for example, the documents relating to the transportation of dancers by donkey in Roman Egypt,[15] and the Greek-language epigraphic evidence for a dancer (*orchēstēs*) in imperial Arelate (Arles, *IG* 14.2474).[16]

A sense of how the ancients must have seen the language of the dancers' gestures as transcending linguistic barriers can be gleaned from Quintilian's encomium of gesture in the context of the rhetor's powers of communication (11.3.85–87; tr. D. Russell, 2001):

> As for the hands, without which delivery would be crippled and made feeble, it is almost impossible to say how many movements they possess, for these almost match the entire stock of words: the hands, I might almost say, speak for themselves. Do we not use them to demand and promise, summon and dismiss, threaten and beg, show horror and fear, inquire and deny, and also to indicate joy, sadness, doubt, confession, remorse, or again, size, quantity, number, and time? Do they not excite, restrain, approve, admire, display shame? [87] Do they not serve instead of adverbs and pronouns when we need to point out places or persons? Amid all the linguistic diversity of the peoples and nations of the world, this, it seems to me, is the common language of the human race (*ut in tanta per omnis gentes nationesque linguae diversitate hic mihi omnium hominum communis sermo videatur*).

The *communis sermo* of gesture must have made the pantomime dancer powerfully appealing to the multilingual audiences in some of the many far-flung theatres and amphitheatres in which his industry flourished. It is scarcely surprising that a medium in which music and movement superseded the spoken word became so ubiquitously loved. Lucian makes a point of including an anecdote in his *De saltante* 64, in which a barbarian monarch from the Black Sea is instructed at Nero's court in the mechanics of pantomime even though, being only half-Hellenised, he cannot understand the libretto. Pantomime was relatively serious theatre on a massive, popular scale, and thus a crucial vehicle for the dissemination of the pagan cultural *koinē* across the Mediterranean world.

Unlike its more ribald sibling genre of mime, pantomime was one of the principal ways, along with sung recitals by star *tragoedi*,[17] in which the prestigious tradition of classical tragedy was kept alive in the Roman Empire. Recent scholarship has emphasised the importance of viewing ancient theatre history as a continuous process of creative responses and

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15 See Sijpesteijn 1976.

16 W.J. Slater (1995) 291.

17 See Hall 2002.

shifting tastes in the treatment of an emerging canon, rather than a consistent process of decline after the glorious fifth-century achievements of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.[18] Pantomime, from an evolutionary perspective, is a descendant of Greek tragic theatre, with which it shared much of its subject-matter, tone, aesthetic appeal and emotive function. It is therefore one of the chief cultural arenas in which we can see at work the processes through which the ancient repertoire emerged and evolved into a canon.

It was also ancient pantomime's destiny to play a seminal role in the emergence of classical ballet, and subsequently, in the twentieth century, of avant-garde *Tanztheater*. It is well known that the founding fathers of opera in the Florentine Camerata looked to ancient myths, and above all what they believed to have been the all-sung form taken by ancient theatrical tragic performances, as the models for their new medium. But considerably less interest has been manifested in the genealogy traced by the inventors of ballet in Enlightenment Italy, Spain, France and England, to the dancers described in the ancient texts on pantomime. The ancient dances, brought to such a high level of artistry and skill by the ancient star performers often conventionally working under such names as Pylades or Bathyllus, Hylas or Paris, fundamentally informed, many centuries later, the nature of modern dance theatre.[19] The semantics of these performers' assumed names may also be significant. "Pylades" (a particular favourite), "Hylas" and "Paris" suggest a desire to lay claim on (by identifying with) the mythic personages brought to life by these performers.

Pantomime was a relatively late arrival in the world of ancient entertainment, emerging in the first century BCE. Writers in antiquity and Byzantine lexicographers elaborated a version of its origins which claimed that it had been introduced to Rome, or even invented there, in around 20 BCE. The men responsible for bringing it into being, according to this narrative, were two great dancers from the East, Bathyllus and Pylades, who came from Alexandria and Cilicia respectively.[20] Bathyllus was a freedman and on close terms with Maecenas, who some said was infatuated with the dancer (Tacitus, *Annals* 1.54.2); the Augustan rhetor Cestus regarded him as the nonpareil in the genre (Seneca *Controversia* 3, *Praef.* 16). Pylades performed at Augustus' dinner parties (Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 54.17.5; Macrobius, *Saturnalia*

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[18] See Easterling (1993) and (1997c); Csapo (2004a); Hall (2007a) and (2007b); Csapo (2010), esp. ch. 5.

[19] Hall 2008b.

[20] Ath. 1.20d; Zosimus, *Historia Nova* 6.1; Suda s.v. "Alexandria", "*pantomimos*", and "Bathyllos". See also Leppin (1992) 284–285, 217–218 and Goldberg (2005) 119–120.

2.7.19). But while Augustus' interest in the medium was of undeniable importance to its success and development, this Roman-centred view of pantomime's origins needs modification.

Athenaeus (1.20e) described Pylades' dancing style as exalted (ὀγκώδης), and emotive (παθητική)—two terms which had long since been associated with the tragedy of Aeschylus and Euripides respectively.[21] But he added that it was 'many-masked' or 'containing many roles' (πολυπρόσωπος), and it was in the star dancer's ability to change masks and role several times that the new medium distinguished itself from its antecedents, for example the danced representation of the marriage of Dionysus and Ariadne, performed in the fourth century BCE at the end of the dinner party described in Xenophon's *Symposium* (9.2–7). The dancers in Xenophon's treatise used gestures and movements to convey the erotic encounter, thereby mightily inflaming their spectators, but they did speak and were apparently unmasked. It is much more difficult to exclude from the category pantomime, understood as non-speaking danced mimetic exposition of mythical narrative, the dancing of the role of Gallus executed by Aristagoras, which was memorialised in an Alexandrian epigram by Dioscorides in the mid-3rd century BCE.[22] This case is strengthened by the subsequent popularity of the Gallus theme in Roman imperial entertainment such as, for example, Suetonius, *Augustus* 68.[23] The picture is made more complex by the rareness of the term *pantomimos* in surviving Greek literature, which prefers to speak simply of a "dancer", or use a variety of different circumlocutions such as "dancer of myths" (ὀρχηστὴς μύθων) which was used to describe a Roman citizen named Furius Celsus, who danced at the beginning of the first century CE at Gortyn in Crete.[24] But in transliterated form *pantomimus* is the standard term in Latin epigraphy.[25]

The Latin-speaking world speedily became addicted to pantomime, partly because since Etruscan times Italians had enjoyed mimetic dancing traditions of their own, so Livy 7.2.3–13, including impersonations of satyrs

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21 On the terminological connections with the ancient discussion of tragedy see Jory (2004) 154–155.

22 On attempts to identify early Greek ancestors of pantomime dancing see above all Kokolakis 1959.

23 See Wiseman (1985) 198–205, who discusses the possibility that Catullus' poem about Gallus, his *Attis* (no. 63), was danced as a pantomime at the Megalesia (i.e., *Megalenses Ludi*), the Roman festival of Cybele; see also Newman (1990) 357–366.

24 Stephanis (1988) no. 1389; see Robert (1969) 241; on the Greek terminology, see also Vesterinen 2005.

25 The contents of this paragraph owe much to Jory (2002) 238–240.

in processions at the games (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 7.70–73), balletic interludes (ἐμβόλιμα) during them, in which women were prominent, fancy-dress role-playing as gods at dinner parties (Velleius Paterculus 2.82.3), and probably mythological burlesque mimes with erotic overtones.[26] The Latin language used a wide variety of terms for the pantomime and other dancers,[27] but the transliterated Latin term *pantomimus* first occurs in an inscription from Naples of about 2 BCE,[28] and in the first century CE the nearby city of Pompeii comes to prominence as a centre of pantomime activity.

It is from Pompeii that there have survived most of the few visual images which, it has been claimed, actually illustrate pantomime performances. One, from the House of Apollo, was identified as such by Bieber. Within the recessed niches and central door of a stage, a dancer is painted in the process of performing the successive roles of Minerva, Apollo and Marsyas.[29] The second house whose wall-paintings have been associated with pantomime is the House of the Four Styles, in which one theatrical picture in particular contains two suggestive scenes. The left side depicts a *pulpitum*, in front of which a boy seems to be holding a static pose, with his left leg held aloft. He is wearing a sleeveless knee-length tunic and a crown of bunches of fruit and vine leaves, and it has been suggested that he is some kind of personification of Autumn in a pantomime.[30] More ambitiously, it has long been speculated that the scenes of dancing in the Villa of the Mysteries represent performances akin to pantomime taking place in the course of rituals related to a Dionysiac mystery cult; but Bastet has interpreted them, instead, as scenes from a theatrical pantomime entertainment in which vignettes from the career of the god Dionysus were danced sequentially.[31]

Pompeii also provides direct epigraphic evidence for the activities of pantomime troupes, and indeed of their rival fan clubs.[32] This cosmopolitan and eastern-looking town was prosperous enough by the second century BCE to enjoy its own large theatre. By the mid-seventies BCE two duumvirs built the small theatre. Later in the imperial period it was to acquire its beautiful stone floor; in his second *Homily on the Spectacles of the Theatre* Jacob of

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26 See especially Wiseman (1985) 47 and (2000b).
27 Starks 2008.
28 *CIL* 10.1074d.
29 Bieber (1961) 232–233, with fig. 776.
30 Elia 1965.
31 Bastet 1974; see also Moorman 1983 and Gallistl 1995.
32 See Franklin 1987.

Sarugh implies that this was the type of floor preferred by discriminating pantomime dancers.[33] This meant that Pompeii had two stone theatres when Rome had not yet acquired even one, which may suggest the availability at Pompeii of a wide range of diverse performances differing in scale, type and number of personnel.[34] The Pompeii amphitheatre followed soon afterwards, and at the beginning of Augustan period the wealthy brothers Marcus Holconius Rufus and Marcus Holconius Celer completely restored the large theatre, dedicating it to Augustus. They added lavish marble ornamentation and increased the capacity of its theatre to five thousand spectators, creating additional seating for the lowest-ranking members of the audience, including slaves and the poor, even if it was constructed to keep them apart from the rest.[35]

The very variety and size of venues at Pompeii raises the question of the type of performance space in which we should expect to place the ancient pantomime dancer, and the answer seems to be that he danced wherever people paid him to do so. Besides amphitheatres, there was a large variety of theatre types across the Roman Empire, ranging from small roofed *odea* and cultic or private theatres to vast public performance spaces. These all featured a *cavea* that was semicircular, or somewhat exceeded a semicircle, but in other respects they displayed considerable regional differences in terms of stage construction and design, facilities, equipment, seating arrangements, and shape of orchestra.[36] One of the advantages of the pantomime idiom was therefore its flexibility in terms of the possible venues and the number of personnel required: the minimum was probably the dancer plus one other person, singing a song and playing an instrument, a combination that could easily be accommodated in the dining space of a private person. Indeed, Zarmakoupi has identified just such a space at the Villa Oplontis at Torre Annunziata, between Pompeii and Herculaneum, which is believed to have belonged to Nero's second wife Poppaea and was undergoing elaborate renovations at the time of the eruption.[37]

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33 The sole manuscript (which also contains metrical discourses by another Syriac homilist, Isaac of Antioch) is in the British Library (Add MS 17158, folios 1–48). Unfortunately, the text of Jacob's first homily is almost entirely missing, and parts of homilies 2 and 3 are illegible. But an edition and translation of what survives was published by Cyril Moss in 1935 in *Le Muséon: Revue d'études orientales* vol. 48; a version of his translation, slightly rephrased and updated, can be found in an appendix to Hall and Wyles 2008.

34 Zanker (1998) 65–68 calls the small theatre an *odeum*.

35 Zanker (1998) 44–46, 107–109, 113.

36 See Sear (2006) 25–36.

37 Zarmakoupi 2007, especially chs. 4–5; see also Sear (2006) 46–47.

In the second century, studies of ancient pantomime tend to shift their focus from Italy to the magnificent city of Antioch on the Orontes, founded by Seleucus I and later seen as the symbolic gateway between the cultures of the West and of the East. From the moment when Julius Caesar confirmed the freedom of the city in 47 BCE, the tradition was established that the Roman Emperors extended special favour towards it. Indeed, scholars have argued that the Romans saw Antioch, to an extent, as an eastern equivalent of Rome. The cosmopolitan citizens of Antioch enjoyed live performances so much that they had two separate theatres, one on Mount Silpius first mentioned in the time of Caesar, and a similar building at Daphne associated with the name of Vespasian. The Mount Silpius theatre was repeatedly enlarged to accommodate an expanding population, under both Tiberius and Trajan, lending an impression of an ever-increasing demand for theatrical entertainments.[38]

Antioch's exceptional mosaics, given to an astonished world when they were excavated in the 1930s, present a colourful impression of the lively visual and performance culture enjoyed by its inhabitants.[39] But the real reason for the prime place taken by Antioch in pantomime studies is that it is the focus of much of the literary evidence. It may have been in Antioch that Lucian composed his oration *De saltante*—a reply to an attack on the dancers (now lost) that had been composed by his brilliant contemporary and rival sophist Aelius Aristides. Aristides' assault on pantomime may have been prompted by the (eventually successful) moves to incorporate pantomime into the official competitive events (θυμελικοὶ ἀγῶνες) held at religious festivals. The dispute may have coincided with the time when Lucius Verus, the co-emperor of Marcus Aurelius and an ardent fan of theatre arts, was enjoying himself at Antioch while officially stationed in the East in order to supervise the ongoing military campaign against the Parthians.[40] Two centuries later it was certainly against the stage shows of Antioch that John Chrysostom's main assault on the theatre is directed in his *Against Games and Theatre Spectacles*.[41] And Libanius' 64th oration, *Reply to Aristides on Behalf of the Dancers*, was written in Antioch.[42]

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[38] Malalas *Chronographia* 222.20–22 and 276.3–9; see Downey (1961) 444.

[39] For further details and reproductions see Becker and Kondoleon 2005; Bingöl 1997; Cimok 2000.

[40] The fundamental exposition of the issues surrounding the date and place of the composition of Lucian's treatise remains Robertson 1913.

[41] *PG* 56.263–270. For John Chrysostom's evidence for pantomime the seminal discussion is still Theocharidis 1940, to be supplemented by Bergian 2004 and Webb 2008a.

[42] The text is available, with somewhat unreliable English translation and detailed commentary, in the edition of Molloy 1996.

Libanius' letters and orations convey his love of the old city where he resided, with its entrepreneurial culture and addiction to entertainment: it was, after all, the sort of place that had a beautiful mosaic depicting a smiling female personification of *Gēthosunē*—Pleasure, or Delight—in its public bath complex.[43] Libanius describes the Antiochene theatre happily resounding "with contests of pipes, lyre and voice and the manifold delights of the stage (11.218)." Libanius received his higher education in the Classics at Athens, before returning to an appointment as the head of the best school in Antioch and the city's official sophist, whose duties included writing on its behalf to the Roman emperor. As the last great Atticist pagan scholar, he watched with dismay the encroachments of Christianity into the old classical curriculum, and did not approve of them. Since, like Lucian in *De saltante*, Libanius is in his oration in defence of the dancers responding to Aristides' attack on them, he was plugging into a controversy that was already two centuries old, and was almost certainly recycling information and images. It has been proposed, therefore, that his treatise may not be reliable as a source of factual and empirical data. But the Emperor Julian's *Misopogon*, a satirical oration on Antioch published in 363 CE, confirms Libanius' impression that there were many actors living there: it was the sort of metropolitan centre which, says Julian, had more mimes than ordinary citizens.[44] Life there for professional performers must have been attractive, at least after Commodus' decree in relation to the city, which (according to Malalas 285.12–16) included amongst its provisions one that gave public support to mimes and pantomime dancers.

Other cities challenged Antioch's claim to supremacy in the field of pantomime, however, since one third-century source specifies Caesarea in Palestine as the city most closely associated with the production of brilliant pantomime dancers.[45] Pantomime dancers were available for hire in Roman Egypt. Pantomime is associated explicitly in the sources with Carthage and Uzalis in North Africa. The case of Sabratha is particularly intriguing. Its theatre is decorated with a superb sculptural depiction of the five roles of Paris, Hermes, and the three goddesses judged by Paris preening themselves, all with the closed mouths of the pantomime mask, dating from the late

43 Becker and Kondoleon (2005) 194 with fig. 4.
44 *Misopogon* 342 B.
45 *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* 32.9, in Rougé (1966) 166.

second century CE,[46] and it was at Sabratha where Apuleius himself was put on trial. Apuleius' novel *Metamorphoses*, often known as *The Golden Ass*, includes one the few ancient descriptions of a dance on a mythological theme, the *Judgment of Paris* ballet in book 10. This was an outstandingly popular theme not only in the theatre, but in rhetorical exercises and the visual arts of the imperial period. Becker and Kondoleon point to the beautiful mosaic illustrating the theme from the Atrium House at Antioch, and suggest that it might well have been among "the entertaining vignettes enacted in the banquet rooms of Roman Antioch …"[47] Pantomime performance of the Judgment of Paris in a much larger, public arena is implied by its depiction on a Roman mosaic from Kos as part of a larger composition, including wild beast hunts, seemingly depicting amphitheatre spectacles.[48]

It is important not to neglect the Western provinces of the empire, where pantomime was enjoyed just as much as in the old Hellenised cities in what is now Turkey and Syria. A colourful anecdote preserved by Dio Cassius recounts how a mediocre freedman dancer named Theocritus failed to impress the connoisseurs of pantomime at Rome, but delighted the allegedly more boorish Gauls for whom he performed at Lugdunum (Lyons) in Eastern France (*Roman History* 17.21.2). Pantomime was certainly performed in south-western France at Narbo (Narbonne) and Arelate (Arles), with its stunning 12,000-seat theatre completed under Augustus, and dazzling orchestra, paved in pink and green with a white marble border.[49] It was at Trier (Augusta Treverorum), a city with a spectacular ancient theatre, that Salvianus was educated, before moving to work as a priest in Massalia (Marseilles) in the mid-5th century CE, and he is a harsh critic of pantomime. Correspondingly, it was at Trier that there was originally discovered the most famous ancient depiction of a pantomime dancer, holding his masks; it is an ivory plaque now in Berlin (*Fig. 2*).

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46 A spectacular colour photograph by Robert Polidoro of these relief sculptures occupies a double spread in Di Vita, Di Vita-Evrard and Bacchielli (1999) 178–179.

47 Becker and Kondoleon (2005) 29, 23–25, with excellent photographs of the mosaic, which is now in the Louvre [Ma 3443].

48 Kondoleon (1991) 109 fig. 5.9.

49 Jürgens (1972) 203–204. On the Arelate theatre, see also Garton (1982) 583 and Sear (2006) 81.

Figure 2. Late antique ivory plaque (AD 5th c.)
from Trier, depicting a pantomime dancer.
Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin 2497.

What was it like to be one of the men who entranced huge audiences in such theatres? How did it feel to be Vincentius, "the glory of the pantomimes", when he "danced the well-known stories" and "held the theatre until the evening stars rose" at Timgad, the Numidian colony for veterans built by Trajan?[50] No doubt he enjoyed his wealth and celebrity. He will surely have relished his ability to mesmerise his spectators as well as move them to tears (Augustine *Confessions* 3.2.4). No doubt he gained immense satisfaction from conversing with all kinds of audiences not through verbal language but through "gesture, nod, leg, knee, hand and spin" (Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carmina* 23.269–270). But since we have lost documents such as the treatise on pantomime that the Augustan star Pylades is said to have written (Athenaeus 1.20e), we have no subjective records of the dancers' thoughts and experiences, although comparison with writings on other global dance traditions such as Kathakali can prove suggestive.[51]

Pantomime masks were distinguished from tragic masks by their closed mouths and greater visual beauty. An invaluable comment in Fronto tells us that the pantomime dancer's costume was very distinctive: he details the remarkable uses to which a single garment—the mantle—could be put (*On Orations* 5). It could also play the role of a *prop*—its fluid fabric allowed it to be moulded to represent a swan, the tresses of Venus, or the scourge of a Fury. Much of the pleasure in pantomime seems to have been generated by the transformation of the dancer into different roles within the individual story: if he was dancing a pantomime version of the story told in Euripides' *Bacchae*, for example, he would successively assume the mask and persona of Dionysus, Tiresias, Cadmus, a messenger, and the delirious Agave (*Greek Anthology* 16.289). It is difficult to reconstruct exactly how the changes of mask and costumes were effected, but the language of costume clearly worked differently in pantomime from the way that it functioned in conventionally staged tragedy.[52]

Women featured prominently in the stories told by the pantomime dancers. They are also to be found at times in the choirs that accompanied it (Libanius *Or.* 64.87), amongst the patrons of the medium (notably the elderly Umidia Quadratilla mentioned by Pliny (*Ep.* 7.241ff.), who does not

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50 See the memorial poem for Vincentius, in limping iambics, first published by Bayet 1955 and translated into English in Csapo and Slater (1994) 383. On the Timgad theatre itself, see Sear (2006) 274.

51 Webb 2008a.

52 Wyles 2008.

altogether approve of a matron indulging in such a hobby), and the hundreds of thousands of spectators who enjoyed it. There may also have been female pantomime dancers on the Roman scene. Despite the terminological confusion created by the variety of words used to describe dancers in the ancient sources, certain unarguable instances of references to female pantomime performers may not be explained away. That there were female dancers termed *saltatrices* or *saltatriculae* of both great quality and great quantity working in imperial Rome is undeniable, but it is not possible to be certain whether their primary expertise was in pantomime, or in another type of dance, or in acrobatics or gymnastics. John Starks has recently argued, however, that a crucial piece of epigraphic evidence has been overlooked. It celebrates a teenage girl named Hellas,[53] who had worked as a pantomime dancer in the Julio-Claudian or slightly later period, and was memorialised as such by her proud father Sotericus. The inscription was found in Narbonne in Gaul.[54]

The presence of women amongst the casts of pantomime, along with the existence of itinerant troupes, reminds us that this was not a medium just about male star dancers. Indeed, defining what was distinctive about pantomime becomes ever more difficult as the familiar sources are compared, and new ones discovered. Pantomime's constant partner in the ancient sources is mime, and certain general distinctions can be drawn between the two. Mime was more often set in the here-and-now of its audience, whereas pantomime was usually set in the mythical past; mime performers were generally unmasked; the generic ancestor of mime was comedy, and that of pantomime was tragedy (although here an outstanding exception is the so-called Charition mime, which burlesques a tragedy, Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*[55]); mime seems to have accommodated a greater degree of lewdness than its more elevated sibling; mime actors usually spoke where pantomime dancers were silent. Other genres which get routinely confused with pantomime, probably because by the time of the Roman Empire performances could combine elements of types of dance and mime that had originally been distinct, including especially the mysterious warlike initiation dance called the 'pyrrhic' (πυρρίχη).[56]

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53 One of my editors suggests "Hellas" is a significant name, indeed "a synopsis, one might say, of the central function of *pantomimoi* as links between Greek culture and Roman spectacle."

54 Starks 2008.

55 On the Charition mime see Hall 2010.

56 On the relationship between pantomime and the pyrrhic dance see Ceccarelli 1998, ch. 9.

As with any live performance before the age of audio-visual recording technologies or even "still" photography, we can never experience the true impact of the art of the pantomime. When it comes to its aural effect, the problem is exacerbated by the way that ancient sources privilege the visual spell cast by the pantomime dancer on his audience. Yet the medium did rely on the other senses to create what seems to have been (to use modern parlance) a multi-medial impact: two sources even stress how the performances appealed to the noses of those present, through the deliciously fragrant burnt spices that were wafted through the performance space.[57] The aural impression made by the medium was also considerable. Cassiodorus speaks of the applause that meets the pantomime dancer because "well-trained and harmonious choruses, accompanied by diverse instruments, assist him in his art" (*Variarum* 4.51.9).

Opponents of pantomime, on the other hand, are suspicious about those harmonious choruses. Indeed, the earliest trace of polemic against pagan music, expressed in the work of the late second-century rhetorician and Christian convert Tatian, targets a performance that looks exactly like pantomime: "I do not wish to gape at many singers, nor do I care to look benignly upon a man who is nodding and motioning in an unnatural way."[58] Similar viewpoints are to be found in the works of the 3rd-century African Christians Tertullian and Arnobius, and become commonplace in the major figures of the fourth century, John Chrysostom, Ambrose and Augustine: these Church Fathers objected not only to the relationship borne by pantomime's masks and numerous gods to the pagan cult of idols and to what they believed to be the sexual immorality of the entire acting profession, but also to the use of musical instruments, which were regularly excluded from ecclesiastical singing. Clement of Alexandria associated musical instruments that featured in pantomime, as well as other types of entertainment, specifically with the debauchery at pagan parties, conceived as a kind of theatre:

> The irregular movements of *auloi*, psalteries, choruses, dances, Egyptian clappers and other such playthings become altogether indecent and uncouth,

57 At the end of *The Judgement of Paris* ballet described in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, a saffron-coloured cloud is released through a spout, releasing 'a sweet odour' that reached everyone in the theatre (10.34). Joseph of Sarugh's third *Homily on the Spectacles of the Theatre* berates the pantomime dancer because "he mimes the stories of the gods, and burns perfume at the plays" (folio 11 verso b of *PBarc* Inv. nos. 158ab, 159ab, 160ab and 161a, incorporated as fols. 33–36; see Hall and Wyles (2008) 415).

58 *Discourse to the Greeks* 22 = *PG* VI, 837, as translated in McKinnon (1987) 2.

> especially when joined by beating cymbals and tympana and accompanied by the noisy instruments of deception. Such a symposium, it seems to me, becomes nothing but a theatre of darkness.[59]

Other instruments found in discussions of pantomime include the panpipes and the lyre (Lucian, *De saltante* 63, 68, 72, 83).

Crucial to the pantomime experience was the rhythmic clacking produced by the *scabellum*. This created an effect less like that of modern tap-dancing than of a loud and insistent metronome. The *scabellum* was a percussion instrument, usually attached to the bottom of the sandal of one of the musicians, the official time-keeper in some ways equivalent to a modern orchestral conductor. Sometimes it consisted of an additional sole of metal or hard wood, attached by a hinge at the heel,[60] and the *scabellarius* could clap it against either stone floors or a plank provided specially.[61] At Rome, several inscriptions reveal that the *scabellarii* were sufficiently proud of their professional specialisation to form a guild (*collegium*).[62] The *scabellum* was particularly disliked by the Christian opponents of pantomime such as the austere African convert Arnobius. In the early fourth century CE he asks whether God could really have meant human souls to sing and play the pipe, and sing impure songs,

> raising the loud din with the clacking of the *scabella*, rousing another crowd of souls to be led in their wantonness to abandon themselves to bizarre motions, to dance and sing, and, moreover, to the accompaniment of this clacking, to raise their haunches and hips, floating along with a tremulous motion of the loins'.[63] *Adversus Nationes* II.42 = *PL* V.881–882

Pantomime could indeed be terrifically noisy. There was an ancient tradition that the individual responsible for the revolution by which pantomime had acquired a whole orchestra to accompany it, with numerous *tibicines*, was the original Pylades (Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 2.7.18). Novatian, a third-century Roman schismatic theologian, suggests that pantomime produced

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59 *Paedagogus* II, iv = *PG* VIII, 440–441, translated by McKinnon (1987) 34. For the cultural context, see Webb 2008b.

60 There is a photograph of a replica *scabellum* designed by the ancient music specialist Annie Bélis, and constructed by Jean-Claude Condi, in Péché and Vendries (2001) 46. For an instrumentalist dressed as a Bacchic dancer playing one (as well as a double *aulos*), on a sarcophagus of the second century CE in the Capitoline Museum at Rome, see the image reproduced in Péché and Vendries (2001) 46.

61 See Lucian, *De saltante* 2, 63, 68; Libanius 64.97; Bélis 1988.

62 See Péché and Vendries (2001) 98–100.

63 Translated by McKinnon 1987.

the effect of an anarchic competition between the dancer, the narrator(s) and the instrumentalists in monopolising the attention of the spectators (*De spectaculis* IV.5 = *PL* IV.783). In large-scale performances of pantomime, the need for a large number of decibels in order to fill out big open-air structures was met by the use of the *hydraulis* (water organ), which was also used in amphitheatre spectacles such as gladiatorial displays (Petronius *Satyrica* 36). An invention of Hellenistic times, usually attributed to Archimedes, the water organ understandably made a huge impact on audiences when they were first introduced to it. The new instrument may have been introduced at Rome not long before Lucretius' late Republican poem *De rerum natura* (see 5.334). The poem entitled *Aetna* that is sometimes attributed to Virgil gives a vivid description of the sound made by the *hydraulis* (292–294), when it functions "by the pressure of the water and of the air, which is forcibly agitated, and like a trumpet (*bucina*) it emits long, booming notes." This poet goes on to describe in more detail exactly how it works (295–297):

> In large theatres, an instrument in the shape of a dome (*cortina*, i.e. the cistern) produces the music by using water. The variety of notes it produces makes it melodious, and it sings, controlled by the art of the performer, as a column of air is propelled by water pressed up from underneath, as if with an oar.[64]

The *hydraulis* could be found wherever imperial culture travelled and for several centuries, for example, in fourth-century Oxyrhynchus.[65]

A fascinating 3rd-century inscription found on Rhodes suggests that the organ also played an important role in the pagan cult of the theatre god Dionysus. The inscription reports that a young priest of Dionysus maintained a choir and a player of the hydraulic organ, whose obligations included performing at all the festivals of the god.[66] The instrument's sophisticated technology allowed it to produce a variety of tonalities that must have seemed to suit this protean divinity, and to be particularly appropriate to the constant transformations undergone by the performer in the fluid dance medium of pantomime. Indeed Tertullian (*De anima* XIV. 4 = *PL* II.669) rhetorically presents the organ as an example of unified diversity—so many pipes and parts and sounds, and yet they constitute a single entity—in language similar to that often found in relation to the dancer, "the single body endowed with many souls" (Lucian, *De saltante* 66). It is entirely appropriate that it is over

64 Translation by the author.

65 A payment of corn is made to a water-organist named Gorgonios in *P.Oxy*. 1 (1898) no. 93, p. 155.

66 See Reinach 1904 and Perrot (1971) 55–56.

a *hydraulis* that on the Orange medallion the dancer Parthenopaeus (see above *Fig. 1*) brandishes his mask. His organ must have been relatively small, with a *tessitura* of only about an octave, but it would still have been capable of generating a variety of sounds and an impressive volume.[67]

All the clacking and variegated trumpeting and booming effects were, however, in principle (if, one imagines, not always in practice) meant to complement, rather than drown out, the words of the libretto. It is the loss of the words that poses one of the greatest problems to the scholar of ancient pantomime. We know that they were an integral part of the performance; Lucian's Lycinus defines the show as "the demonstration (δείξειν) of the things that were being sung" (τὰ ᾀδόμενα, *De saltante* 62), by means of the dancer's movements. Although virtuosic singing was not a requirement, since the songs that accompanied pantomime did not pose the same technical challenges as were faced, for example, by star *tragoedi*, the choirs must have included competent vocalists. Moreover, several popular pantomime themes, such as those involving the famous voices of Orpheus or Philomela after her metamorphosis into a bird, are likely to have offered opportunities for solo singing by individual members of the choir.[68] Petronius describes a high-pitched aria being sung solo by a slave-boy at a symposium at the precise moment when it is likened to a pantomime (*Satyrica* 31); Pliny implies that the singing in pantomime sounded effeminate (*Panegyricus* 54). But of the ᾀδόμενα, the actual songs that accompanied pantomime, we may have no certain examples, beyond the uninformative three Greek words, "the great Agamemnon", with which a pantomime danced by the Augustan star Hylas apparently concluded (Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 2.7.13–14).

We can be sure, however, that these libretti existed. When it comes to the material text composed by the pantomime librettists and from which the dancers and musicians worked, they were probably designated, in Latin at least, by the term the Latin fathers use for theatrical texts used by actors—*histrionum litterae*, or *histrionicae litterae* (Tertullian, *Apologeticus* 15.2, *Ad nationes* 1.10.4). Crinagoras refers to a text performed by Bathyllus in the era of Augustus as the "story", or "plot" (*muthos*, *AP* 9.542), just as Martial on one occasion refers to the *fabula* (*Liber de spectaculis* 2.7.17); Lucian specifies "the things sung" (τὰ ᾀδόμενα, *De saltante* 2.62) and "the songs" (τὰ ᾄσματα, *De saltante* 2.74). In Latin, the libretto as enjoyed in performance is often called

[67] Perrot (1971) 93.

[68] Lucian, *De saltante* 51; Claudian, *Against Eutropius* 2.405; see further Hall (2002) 29–30.

the *canticum*; Martial refers to Hylas dancing a *canticum*, with *saltare* as a transitive verb that takes *canticum* as its object (*Liber de spectaculis* 2.7.13; see also Suetonius, *Nero* 39).

The poets Statius and Lucan are both said to have written pantomimes,[69] and the evidence suggests that they were always in verse rather than prose. One line of approach to libretti is to explore specific examples of surviving literary works that we know were used in pantomime. Three sequences from the *Aeneid* were definitely performed in pantomime—those dealing with Dido, Turnus, and the *katabasis* to the Underworld (tales dealing with love, death, violence, and vivid spectacle): Macrobius, for example, says that the love story of Dido and Aeneas is kept alive by the incessant gestures and songs of the actors (*Saturnalia* 5.17.5).[70] The strong visual appeal and bodily transformations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* have long invited comparison with the pleasures of pantomime, and the use of Ovidian poetry in this dance form seems confirmed by Ovid's references from exile to his poetry being danced in the theatres.[71]

Since Greek tragedy is known to have been fertile material for this medium, the quest for pantomime libretti takes us to the surviving examples of tragedy from Rome, the corpus of plays attributed to Seneca, especially since the type of performance for which they were intended, and to which they were subject (which are different things altogether), are both such disputed questions. It may be just coincidence that the same Latin Church Fathers who so frequently fulminated against pantomime also attest to the remarkable staying power of the reputation of Senecan tragedies—especially *Hercules Furens*, *Troades*, *Oedipus*, *Phaedra* and *Thyestes*—into Christian times.[72] It was a path-breaking article by Zimmermann[73] which first analysed passages from the plays with this hypothesis in mind. Zimmermann argued that Seneca's tragedies contain several types of passage that point precisely to the character of a *fabula saltata* ('danced story'), and that this suggests that even if Seneca did not write them specifically for pantomime performance, he may have been influenced by the new aesthetics and conventions of the popular medium in the composition of these scenes. He may have been

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69 For Statius' Agave libretto see Juvenal, *Sat.* 7.82–87; for Lucan see the anonymous *Life* of Lucan sometimes attributed to Vacca (p. 78, 16 in Reifferscheid 1860).

70 See Panayotakis 2008.

71 Ingleheart 2008.

72 Jürgens (1972) 237–245, 56–65.

73 First published in 1990, this text is available in English translation as Zimmermann 2008.

visualising, as he wrote, a theatrical performance with dance and music rather than a recitation. Indeed, close readings of Senecan verse have now shown how apparently intractable problems related to the possibility of staging the plays disappear entirely if pantomimic performances formed part of the entertainment.[74]

Moreover, one pantomime libretto based on a canonical tragedy may in fact have survived. The candidate is a Latin hexameter poem, preserved only in a Barcelona papyrus (*PBarc* Inv. nos. 158ab, 159ab, 160ab and 161a, incorporated as fols. 33–36), on the theme of Alcestis' death, familiar to the ancient world above all from Euripides' *Alcestis*. The metre of the poem is shared by the *Aeneid*, which is known to have been performed by pantomime dancers (Macrobius 5.17.5), and the theme, the death of Alcestis, is said in other sources to have attracted practitioners of the medium, which (unlike Athenian tragedy) enjoyed enacting violence and death scenes in front of its audience. Moreover, the structure, which entails five separate sections devoted to five characters in the myth, culminating in the protracted death of the heroine, offers exactly the successive changes of role and emotive vignettes that would facilitate a pantomime performance.[75]

By the first century CE, people living in a large area of the ancient world had developed a vivid mental image of the pantomime dancer and his art, and the shared mental image, with all its associations, began to affect cultural discourses and practices. At the peak of pantomime's popularity in the late second and third centuries CE, pantomime competed for prominence in festival contests, and for the attention of wealthy patrons, with several other prominent forms of display in addition to actual staged drama (which became increasingly rare). The rival forms of performance included singing epic to the lyre (*kitharōidia*), singing tragic arias (*tragōidia*), and above all the performance of showcase rhetoric. In setting itself up as a rival attraction, pantomime inevitably attracted criticism from professional singers, sophists, and declaimers, who found it easy to charge it, as a relative latecomer into the cultural repertoire of acts on offer, as trivial, decadent, sleazy or low-class.

Pantomime has indeed always had a sense of newness about it. It was a relatively late arrival on the ancient Greco-Roman entertainment scene, and therefore had to appropriate an old Muse rather than be given a new one. Polymnia or Polyhymnia, formerly the muse in charge of hymns and sometimes rhetoric or geometry, acquired a whole new portfolio as the

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74 Zanobi 2008.

75 Hall 2008a.

new Muse of Pantomime. The identification of the ancient name with this novel and sophisticated dance medium is perhaps best expressed in Nonnus' revisionist Dionysiac epic, when he describes the Muses' performance at the wedding of Cadmus and Harmonia: "Polymnia, nursing-mother of the dance, waved her arms, and sketched in the air an image of a soundless voice, speaking with hands and moving eyes in a graphic picture of silence full of meaning" (*Dionysiaca* 5.88).[76] Silence "full of meaning": there could be no better description of the fragmented, disjointed but commanding evidence for the cultural significance of ancient pantomime.

76 Translated by W.H.D. Rouse 1940.

INTEGRATING OPSIS

STRINGED INSTRUMENTS IN FIFTH-CENTURY DRAMA*

George A. Kovacs

This chapter is concerned with a confluence of two performative elements, the aural and the visual, in the role played by the stringed instruments collectively known as *lyrai* in Greek theatre of the fifth century, either as stage properties or musical accompaniment.[1] Greek musicians were instrumental in creating the performative soundscape (along with the singing chorus and the actors themselves), but visual representations with theatrical contexts depict musicians, particularly the *aulêtês*, in elaborate costumes, suggesting that they were visible during performance. I am interested here in the handful of plays in which we can be reasonably sure that a stringed instrument was played or appeared in an actor's hands as stage property.[2] In each of these cases, the *lyra* had a thematic purpose in the play either as plot device or as defining feature of a specific character. In-text reference to regular incidental music, such as that played to accompany a choral ode or actor's monody, is absent in tragedy, though some (likely not authorial) *parepigraphai* are preserved. Even in comedy textual evidence is circumstantial. Analysis of the textual and visual evidence nevertheless leads me to some practical observations on the dramaturgical use of *lyrai* in the fifth century. One of my contentions here is that when a *lyra* appeared in tragedy, it was as a stage prop in the form of a traditional *chelys* (shell) *lyra* and was accompanied by an off stage professional playing a concert *kithara* (box *lyra*). I conclude with a discussion of Sophocles' *Thamyras*, for which Sophocles himself was said to have played the *lyra*.[3]

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* An early stage of this paper was delivered to the Classical Association of Canada. C.W. Marshall and Ian Storey both read late drafts and provided many helpful comments; Ian Storey also kindly allowed me to consult his (then) forthcoming Loeb edition of comic fragments. Roy Hagman and Cindy Ellen Morgan, performers with the medieval ensemble Hurly Burly in Peterborough Ontario, lent their expertise in pre-modern instruments. Robin Osborne and Peter Wilson both kindly showed me drafts of their articles on the Pronomos Vase.

1 Harps enter the visual record in Athens surprisingly late, circa 430 BC (Bundrick (2005) 30). They are mentioned but do not appear on stage in the fifth century as far as we can tell.

2 The evidence limits me to plays of the fifth century, but several fourth-century comedies have suggestive titles: Anaxilas' *Lyropoios*; Antiphanes' *Aulêtês*; Philetaerus' *Philaulos*; Theophilus' *Kitharôidos*.

3 Throughout this chapter, I favour the Attic Thamyras over the Homeric Thamyris.

Although *lyra* types are described in detail elsewhere, a note on type and nomenclature is necessary.[4] In the Classical period, the term *lyra* could refer to any type of *lyra* or *kithara*. Context usually—but not always—clarifies whether the term is being used comprehensively or specifically. The fundamental division is between bowl or shell *lyrai*, which use a tortoise shell for a sound box, and box *lyrai*, which have wooden sound boxes. Of the former category, the *chelys lyra* is the most common, and so the word *lyra* most commonly refers to the *chelys lyra* (the tortoiseshell lyre). Visual representations and surviving fragments of sound boxes suggest the shell of the *testudo marginata*, the largest species of tortoise in Greece; a mature tortoise could grow up to 14 inches in length (Bundrick (2005) 16 n. 15). This *lyra* was built by hollowing out the tortoise shell, attaching arms and a yoke for strings, and covering the sound box with stretched animal skin. The bridge sat directly against the taut skin, and tension was put on the strings partly through torsion of the arms—just like the stringing of a bow.[5] It must have been lightweight and easy to carry; it is depicted on vases in a variety of poses (sometimes carried with one hand) and is seen from both the front and the back (Bundrick (2005) 17–18).[6] This is the *lyra* invented by Hermes on the day of his birth and given to Apollo in the *Hymn to Hermes* and in Sophocles' *Ichneutai*, both of which include descriptions of the construction process.[7] It is also the *lyra* most typically depicted in mythical scenes on vases, accompanying portrayals of Orpheus, Thamyras, or even Theseus.[8] Skill on the *chelys lyra* was considered an essential part of a cultured citizen's upbringing, and vase depictions of training scenes reveal that it was on the *chelys lyra* that boys learned to play (Maas and Snyder (1989) 87–89).

Of the box *lyrai*, the *kithara* was most common in the classical period, having succeeded the Homeric *phorminx*. It was constructed of a wooden box

[4] On technical aspects of instrument construction and playing technique, as well as on ancient music theory, Barker (1989), Maas and Snyder (1989), West (1992), Creese (1997), Mathiesen (1999), Landels (1999), and Bundrick (2005) are all useful.

[5] Cf. *Odyssey* 21.404–409 and Heraclitus fr. 51 DK (= 27 Marcovich), παλίντονος ἁρμονίη ὅκωσπερ τόξου καὶ λύρης, 'a stringing like for a bow or lyre bends back upon itself', see Snyder (1984).

[6] Back views offer the vase painter the opportunity to depict the more colourful side of the *lyra*.

[7] *Hymn to Hermes* 39–54; *Ichneutai* from *P.Oxy* 1174 287–295 and 312–325 (fr. 314 R, both passages are fragmentary, but the chorus must hear of the ox hide for their accusations of cattle rustling at 335).

[8] Theseus is seen with a *lyra* only in early representations. In the fifth century, he loses the association with this aristocratic instrument; see P. Wilson (2004) 299.

with built-in arms that curved out and back in toward a pair of parallel posts for the string yoke. This *lyra* was larger and heavier than its shell counterpart: vase depictions often include a sling to help bear the weight of the *kithara*, which was held outward from the body during playing. A piece of cloth was often hung from the back, apparently for decoration, though it may have had some practical use (for drying sweaty hands or strings? See Mathiesen (1999) 266). Where the *chelys lyra* was more traditional and mythological, the *kithara* was a fifth-century concert instrument. As the strings tightened against a fixed frame, greater tension (and therefore volume) was possible (Landels (1999) 65–66). Size of the sound box likely had some effect on volume, but not much: a modern upright bass is not much louder than a guitar. Professional *kitharôidoi* (musicians who played and sang) frequently engaged in competition, and the larger instrument was more technically demanding. The *kithara* may have become more complex toward the end of the fifth century with additional strings, in conjunction with the rise of the New Music, but this complexity may rather be attributable to new playing techniques (Maas 1992). When a *lyra* appeared in the hands of an actor, it was surely the *kithara*, played by an off stage musician, that actually provided the sound in performance.

For each of the *chelys lyra* and the *kithara*, there is a smaller but distinct cousin relevant here.[9] The *barbitos* was another shell *lyra*, constructed from a smaller shell with longer arms that flared out before curving back in toward the string yoke. Visual representations indicate Dionysian associations and the *barbitos* seems to have been most commonly played at *kômoi* and *symposia*: it was a party instrument. Its proportionally smaller sound box and longer strings would not have provided a great deal of volume, and so the instrument was best suited to private settings. The *barbitos* would not have been ideal for theatrical use, though we do know of at least one likely appearance. At *Knights* 522, the Old Comedy poet Magnes is ψάλλων 'plucking', 'twanging', or 'strumming'.[10] This, we are told by the scholiast, is

[9] The *phorminx*, the smaller box *lyra* known to Homer, had by the fifth century been relegated to exclusively female use in smaller social contexts. Early references suggest a continuity with the larger *kithara*, which succeeded it.

[10] Playing technique is uncertain, as is the exact implication of this verb, which can be used of stringed instruments or of the bow. Maas and Snyder (1989) 64, 84 analyze positions of the right hand in the visual evidence and conclude that the *kitharistês* 'uses [the plectrum] in a stroke that sweeps outward across the strings, sounding all the strings that are not damped with the left-hand fingers.' This technique, they conclude, is applicable to both *kithara* and *chelys lyra*.

an oblique reference to Magnes' play *Barbitistai*. The title, a plural agent noun, suggests the chorus, but whether the instruments were 'played' (and accompanied by an off stage *kithara*) on stage we do not know.[11]

There is also the 'Thracian *lyra*,' so called through associations with Thamyras, Orpheus, and Musaios, though they are not the only ones seen with it, nor do they use it exclusively (in fact, Orpheus and Musaios are only seen once with this *lyra*[12]). It also appears in some images without a known mythical context.[13] There is no known name for this *lyra* in antiquity, and it is not clear that it was considered a distinct instrument. This smaller *lyra* had a distinctly shaped wooden sound box—inverted circular corners at the bottom of the box. The arms, though they terminate in the vertical posts of the *kithara*, appear to be pieces of wood attached to the sound box and bent in similar fashion to those of the *chelys lyra*. The unique shape of the sound box, I suspect, is in imitation of the tortoise shell shape (I discuss one image below in which it is difficult to tell which *lyra* is being played). Maas and Snyder (1989) 82 note that it appears to be iconographically interchangeable with the *chelys lyra* in mythical scenes.

P. Wilson (1999, 2002, 2004) identifies in fifth-century Athens a perceived dichotomy between the primary instruments of the day, the *aulos* and *lyra*. This tension arises from differences between the understood social status and aesthetic of each instrument and its actual use in various social settings. The *aulos*, for instance, caused physical distortion in the face of the musician, denied the musician the power of *logos* (a cornerstone of social cultivation), had foreign connections (various *harmoniai* or 'modes' included the Lydian and Phrygian as well as the Dorian and Ionian), and was most often played

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[11] The scholiast lists the titles of five plays, only one of which is attested elsewhere. The scholiast may be inferring the titles from the text, but it is difficult to see why the scholiast would infer the title *Barbitistai* from the reference to strumming when there were other, more theatrical instruments to choose from; see Storey (2011).

[12] Orpheus: Athens Nat. Mus. 15190 (*LIMC* "Orpheus" 30); Mousaios: New York MMA Samuel D. Lee Fund 1937 37.11.23 (*LIMC* s.v. "Eumolpus" 1). Mousaios and Thamyras appear on one Attic pyxis together, with Mousaios playing a harp and Thamyris playing a Thracian *lyra*, Athens, Nat. Mus. 19636 (*LIMC* s.v. "Thamyris, Thamyras" 9). See Philippaki (1988).

[13] Athens Nat Mus 1469, *ARV*^{2} 1084.17, for instance, shows a youthful-looking *kitharistês* standing on a small podium between a winged figure (presumably Nike) and a bearded man with a staff who seems to be judging the musician. One particularly interesting example (New York MMA Fletcher Fund 1925 25.78.66; *LIMC* s.v. "Silenoi" 97) shows three satyrs playing Thracian *lyrai* before an *aulêtês* in performance costume. The satyrs are labelled as 'Singers at the Panathenaia'. The satyrs are not seen playing in unison, but this should not be taken as evidence for asynchronous playing. Rather, the artist has drawn each at a different point in the act of strumming, and the three figures (virtually indistinguishable) together represent the complete action.

by foreigners, slaves, and women. Yet the *auloi* were everywhere in Athens. The story of Athena and Marsyas, preserved in Pausanias' account (1.24) of a statue group on the Acropolis, articulates the ambiguity: Athena has discovered and now rejects the instrument, while the satyr Marsyas picks it up (P. Wilson (1999) 74–77). This dichotomy is not always borne out in practice, as Wilson acknowledges: *aulêtai* were everywhere in Athens from drinking parties to triremes to theatrical productions, and musicians could achieve great fame. Not only that, the place of *kitharôidia* in Athenian intellectualism and other manifestations of cultural elitism grew far more complex as the fifth century progressed, bound up as it was with the politically fraught 'New Music' (P. Wilson 2004). Nevertheless, this division of *aulos* and *lyra* reflects the general perception of the ancients themselves and makes a useful starting point for dramaturgical analysis.

Greek theatre (and tragedy in particular) was regarded as the most prominent Athenian cultural product of the period, so we might expect the *lyra*, itself endowed with a long-standing mythological and literary pedigree, to be an important part of theatre. Yet the instrument of the theatre was clearly the *aulos*: 'Strings are striking primarily for their *absence*' (P. Wilson (2004) 277). The *aulos* saw more widespread use in the performance of Greek theatre partly for practical reasons: it was louder and could therefore be heard when accompanying a singing chorus. Just how loud a *kithara* could be is debatable, but surely it could not overcome a chorus as effectively as the *aulos*.[14]

Use and appearance of the *lyra* in fifth-century drama were in fact quite rare. These appearances are not confined to one theatrical genre: tragedy, comedy, and satyr-play all used *lyrai* on stage. That *lyrai* must have been

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14 Maas and Snyder (1989) 33, 54, 65 suggest that the *kithara* might be louder than originally imagined, but the evidence they supply is limited. Visual evidence is limited to a single early relief depicting two *kithara* players (Orpheus and a companion on the Argo on a metope from the treasure of the Sikyonians, c. 560 BCE), which show the *kitharai* in side view, with deep sound boxes, but the image is extremely worn. Even if this depiction is accurate, a deeper sound box would not produce a louder *kithara*, but a more resonant one with a deeper sound (admittedly deeper sounds are more effective in accompaniment). This would explain one literary reference to the *phorminx* as βρομίαν 'thundering' or 'resonant' (Pindar *Nem.* 9.8). Other terms for the sound of the *phorminx* include ἀυτά 'cry' (Pindar fr. 140a.61, where the multiple *phorminges* are also described as λιγυσφαράγων, 'shrill-voiced'), βοαί 'shouts' (Pindar *Pyth.* 10.39), ἐνοπάν 'crying' or 'screaming' (Eur. *Ion* 882), ἰαχάν 'shout' (Eur. *IA* 1039) or the more neutral ὀμφά 'voice' (Bacc. 14.13). These typically place the sound of *lyrai* (usually plural) in a mythical or supernatural context (among the Hyperboreans, for instance, or in the presence of Dionysus) and among an orchestral cacophony of other instruments, *auloi* and choruses especially. The only other example given by Maas and Snyder, that the *kitharôidos* is louder than the cock's crow at *Ecclesiazusae* 737–741, refers to the singer rather than the instrument.

used occasionally to provide accompaniment to various passages of tragedy seems certain from *Frogs* 1284–1295, where Euripides (for whom we have the least evidence of stringed music) mocks Aeschylus for his use of the *lyra*. Furthermore, Sophocles was known for his skill with the *lyra*, so much so that his portrait adorned the *Stoa Poikile* with *lyra* in hand (*Vita* 5). I will return to both these examples.

The *aulos*, as noted, was ubiquitous in Athenian culture. That *aulêtai* do not seem to have been recognized for their contribution until the late fifth century is hardly surprising: neither were the other creative talents that stood behind a theatrical performance (scene painters, costume designers). Nevertheless, the musician, unlike those other creative talents, was visible in performance and the appearance of an *aulêtês* in his elaborate costume seems to be a conscious marker of theatrical performance in visual representations (Taplin (1993) 69). *Lyra* players, when dressed up, typically indicate individual, rather than theatrical, performance as a *kitharôidos* (*figure 1*).[15] In traditional mythic scenes on vases, even those possibly influenced by a performance, the musicians do not break the 'fourth wall'—they do not explicitly divulge the influence of theatre (I will end my discussion with one possible—but still subtle—exception). Since *lyrai* typically appear only according to the demands of a mythic plot, they are less likely to be depicted in a way that would betray their performance context. The difference in theatrical presence is articulated on the famous Pronomos vase (*figure 2*), which depicts a cast and musicians (the chorus are dressed as satyrs, but elements of the preceding tragedies may also be represented) celebrating a victory.[16] In this image, the title figure, the *aulêtês* Pronomos, is attired in the ornate garb of the professional musician—and he is still playing.[17] The *lyra* player Charinos, on the other hand, is seen in heroic/satyric nudity and wears only a *chlamys* thrown over his shoulders. It seems unlikely that he played naked, but the artist's iconographic sensibilities have overridden any sense of photographic obligation to the imagined composite scene. Charinos thus appears as a member of the cast rather than as supporting musician, even though the latter role is more likely (P. Wilson (2010) posits that he may also have been the *khorēgos*, which does not exclude the possibility of his being the musician as well). His *chelys lyra* too belongs to the internal, mythical world of the drama

15 New York, MMA Fletcher Fund 56.171.38. *ARV*^{2} 197.3.

16 Naples, National Museum 3240, inv. 81673. Significant discussions include: Krumeich et al. (1999) 562–565; Froning (2002) 83–84; Taplin and Wyles (2010).

17 This is the famous Theban *aulêtês*, here depicted as a younger man despite his advanced age at the time the vase was produced, see P. Wilson (2010).

Figure 1. Kitharode performing; red figure amphora by the Berlin Painter; circa 490; New York MMA Fletcher Fund 56.171.38.

Figure 2. The Pronomos vase; circa 400; Naples, National Museum 3240, inv. 81673.

rather than to the extra-performative context of the scene. Also, Charinos has stopped playing—his music ends with the drama, as opposed to the metatheatrical *aulêtês* Pronomos, who is not confined by the limits of the performance.

The musical component of ancient theatre is particularly difficult to reconstruct. Two early papyri scraps preserve musical notation for lines of Euripidean tragedy, but their connection to the music of the fifth century is uncertain.[18] We possess titles for many treatises on sound and music in performance—it appears to have been a popular topic—but contemporary documents are lost.[19] Nevertheless, there do remain visual portrayals of musical performances in a variety of (overlapping) contexts—theatrical, sympotic, ritual—which can be examined profitably, if cautiously.[20] We can likewise consider mythical accounts of the origins and uses of musical instruments, and the social and cultural preoccupations that attend them throughout history: the proliferation of vases featuring the Marsyas theme in the late fifth century, for instance, reveals much about paradoxical Athenian attitudes toward the *auloi*, in which the instrument is simultaneously given an Athenian origin even as it is rejected by Athena (P. Wilson (1999) 60–69).

Each type of *lyra* varied in the social or theatrical context in which it was used and therefore conveyed different meaning(s). The *barbitos*, for instance, had obvious connotations of drinking and revelry, and was therefore suitable for comedy or satyr-play (though the latter use is unattested theatrically, we do see satyrs playing the instrument in scenes without theatrical signifiers). For on-stage use, only the *chelys lyra* would be properly compatible with the mythical and heroic world of Greek tragedy. In vase paintings, it is the *chelys lyra* that is most commonly in the hands of mythical characters, who are frequently depicted in heroic nudity. The *kithara*, on the other hand, was considered more technical and associated with the virtuoso *kitharôidoi* who would compete in musical *agônes*. This is perhaps the most common visual

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18 P. Vienna G 2315 (= *Orestes* 338–444) and P. Leiden inv. P. 510 (= *IA* 1500–1509, 784–794). Both date to the third or possibly second century BCE. These are collected by Pöhlman and West (2001).

19 It is of course impossible to know how much is lost, but known titles are suggestive. One measure could be those documents named by Athenaeus in the *Deipnosophistae*, catalogued by Barker (1989) 301–303. There we find eighteen treatises from the fifth, fourth, and third centuries whose titles explicitly name a musical instrument or practice. None survive.

20 The correlation between vase paintings and the theatrical performances that may have inspired them has been a topic of much debate. Taplin provides level-headed appraisals for drama (1993) and tragedy specifically (2007). For a more sceptical point of view see Small (2003). Csapo (2010) 1–82 treats the subject thoroughly.

representation of the *kithara*: in the hands of a richly dressed *kitharôidos* in solitary performance (*figure 1*). Yet the louder *kithara* was the more appropriate instrument to accompany a performing singer or chorus. Even if they possessed the technical skill to play stringed instruments, actors would have faced significant obstacles to play during a performance (not least because they were wearing masks), and so it seems unlikely that actors actually played *lyrai* of any type on stage, even when playing musician characters like Amphion or Thamyras. More plausible is an actor miming the actions of playing, with a *chelys lyra* as stage prop, while an off stage *kitharistês* played in time. The disconnect between the visual and aural presentation of the two different instruments would not have been significant: in modern productions of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, for instance, Tamino is often seen playing a wooden flute while his counterpart in the orchestra pit plays a fully functional modern instrument (the bells of Papageno in the same opera provide another parallel). As with modern opera productions, the ancient musician was likely visible to the audience: hiding the musician (and his instrument) would hamper both volume and musical clarity.

Depictions of *aulêtai* give us at least some idea of how a musician interacted with actors in a Greek play. The Apulian kalyx-crater of the Bari Pipers provides a particularly pertinent example (*figure 3*).[21] On it, three actors in comic dress stand on an elevated stage. The leftmost figure is an old man with a cane, watching two younger men dancing vigorously (their costumes flutter behind them) and each playing a pair of *auloi*. To the right, however, behind a small tree crouches another figure playing the *auloi*.[22] This figure is the only one actually playing the instrument: only he wears the *phorbeia*, the strap around the head that held the pipes to the player's mouth, and he is dressed in the garment of a professional *aulêtês*.[23] The position of the *aulêtês* raises the question of how integral his presence was to the actual performance: the crouching position may indicate a desire to be considered separate from the dramatic world of the characters, yet still part of the performative experience, on stage and theatrically garbed. A Campanian bell krater (the 'Melbourne *aulêtris*') depicts a professionally garbed *aulêtris* standing and playing at the base of the steps leading to a stage.[24] She is

21 Collection of Contessa Malaguzzi-Valeri, no. 52. *RVAp*. 400, 15/28.

22 Trendall (1991) 162–163 and elsewhere suggests the tree is real and not a stage prop, but I am sceptical; see Taplin (1993) 74 n. 20.

23 Or it may be an *aulêtris*, see Lo Porto (1979); no Athenian vase shows a female player, Taplin (1993) 71.

24 Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria D14/1973, *LCS* supp. ii 222, 337b; *LCS* iii. 201, 337a.

Figure 3. The Bari pipers; Apulian Kalyx Krater 365–350; Contessa Maleguzzi—Valeri no. 52.

addressed by a comic character bearing a torch, suggesting a metatheatrical 'reaching out' to an off stage figure (*Acharnians* 862, *Thesmophoriazusae* 1172–1231, *Ecclesiazusae* 890–892 provide in-script parallels). Comedy's use of 'flute girls' as on stage characters occasionally confuses the issue: some pipers may or may not be official *aulêtai*. Two vases, however, depict a professional musician playing among actors. The first is the vase of the so-called Getty Birds, an Attic calyx krater, in which an (unusually) bearded piper in professional costume stands between two comic dancers in elaborate bird costumes.[25] Discovery of another Attic pelike in 2008, which features a single bird dancer on one side of the vase and *aulêtês* on the other, suggests the Getty vase to be 'a second artistic rendition of the same performance' (Csapo (2010) 10).[26] In

[25] Formerly Malibu 82.AE.83, *BArch* 13689, now repatriated to Italy.
[26] Museum of Emory University, uncatalogued.

Figure 4. The Kiev fragment; Red figure bell krater, c. 415; Kiev, Museum of the Academy of Sciences, unnumbered.

this instance one can imagine the *aulêtês* making noises for the birds as they interact. The other vase is a fragment of a bell krater, especially intriguing as it is both Attic and late fifth-century (*c.* 415). It appears to depict an *aulêtês* accompanying tragic dancers, rather than comic (*figure 4*).[27] Csapo (2010) 9 comments on the unprecedented realism of the scene: 'For the first time the art shows us a performance, pure and simple, without even a hint at the story behind the performance, let alone the myth behind the story.' The dancers wear realistic-looking masks (i.e., without comic exaggeration) and are seen in different dance poses. The *aulêtês* plays between the two dancers. He is accompanied by a young male assistant, who may be holding spare mouthpieces (his hands are upon the break in the shard). The presence of the boy is certainly unusual; Revermann (2006a) 87 n. 64 suggests a rehearsal context.

Another important detail in this fragment is the consistency in costume: not only are the choreuts in matching costumes, but so too are the *aulêtês* and his assistant, all with the same circle-pattern and dark hem.[28] The costume

[27] Kiev, Museum of the Academy of Sciences, unnumbered.

[28] A fragment attributed to the Pronomos painter (c. 400) shows an *aulêtês* in costume after (before?) performance surrounded by chorus members who have removed their masks. Here, the costumes of each choreut and *aulêtês* differ slightly, but all bear a consistent level of

of the *aulêtês* differs only in its cut: he wears a longer flowing cloak, while the choreuts are belted with dark hems at the shoulders. The *aulêtês* wears the *phorbeia*, which shows he is actually playing, and marks him as a non-speaking figure, clearly not part of the chorus. This musician, then, is clearly a performer—the official *aulêtês* of the production—and part of the theatrical experience of the play.

As usual, comedy is more forthcoming with practical details.[29] In Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*, Euripides and his kinsman visit the poet Agathon, who is wheeled out on the *ekkyklēma* as he composes verses for a new play. If the instrument of composition was the *lyra*, as P. Wilson (2005) 185 reasonably suggests, we might expect a stringed instrument as a prop, and perhaps 'played' by the poet to accompany his singing. Just what type of *lyra* would Agathon have? After the song, the kinsman mocks Agathon's appearance, and juxtaposes the *barbitos* with a feminine κροκωτός, or 'saffron robe', and a *lyra* with a κεκρύφαλος, or 'hairnet' (*Thesmophoriazusae* 137–138). The kinsman signals his abuse as a parody of Aeschylus' *Lycurgeia* trilogy, which featured Orpheus in at least one play (*Bassarides*, in which the Thracian bard is torn apart by followers of Dionysus, and possibly *Edonoi*). The kinsman, however, is unlikely to be describing the instrument in Agathon's hands accurately: rather he is invoking the rather more masculine variations of the *lyra* family (the *barbitos*, as noted above, was associated with masculine, sympotic drinking and revelry) to contrast with Agathon's feminine clothing.[30] Near the end of his song, Agathon invokes the *kithara* (120–125):

Λατώ τε κρούματά τ' 'Ασιάδος ποδὶ
παράρυθμ' εὔρυθμα Φρυγίων
διὰ νεύματα Χαρίτων.
Σέβομαι Λατώ τ' ἄνασσαν
κίθαρίν τε ματέρ' ὕμνων
ἄρσενι βοᾷ δοκίμων.

Leto and the chords in time to Asian foot,
good rhythms by the nods of
Phrygian Graces.
I revere both mistress Leto and

elaborate decoration. Würzburg, Martin von Wagner-Museum H 4781, *ARV* 1338. See Taplin (2007) 30.

29 In addition to the examples here, Phrynicus and Ameipsias each wrote a *Connus*, a musician associated with the *lyra*. The music teacher Damon appeared in Eupolis' *Goats*.

30 West (1992) 58 takes the mention of a *barbitos* as possible evidence that Dionysus carried such an instrument in *Edonoi*.

kithara, mother of songs
worthy of a manly shout.[31]

As an experienced playwright and composer of New Music (as the kinsman complains at *Thesmophoriazusae* 100), Agathon was presumably proficient on the *kithara*. The relaxed barriers of Old Comedy and the natural demands of the scene would have allowed for a *kithara* on stage, which tragedy would otherwise deny (the scene is contemporary, rather than mythical, and would not have demanded a *chelys lyra*). Comedy frequently exposes the dramaturgical workings of tragedy: in this scene an instrument normally heard in tragedy is conspicuously seen (compare the call outs to the *aulêtês* above).

Visual evidence that a *kithara* could be used in comedy is found on a fourth-century Paestan bell krater depicting the *kitharôidos* and dithyrambic poet Phrynis in a clearly comic scene (*figure 5*).[32] Like Agathon, Phrynis was known—and criticized—as a composer of New Music.[33] Thought since Taplin (1993) 42 to be a scene from Eupolis' *Demoi*, the image shows Pyronides pulling an obviously reluctant Phrynis, who wears a crown and carries a *kithara* and *plectrum*.[34] The nature of the scene and Phrynis' role in *Demoi* are uncertain.[35] On the vase, Phrynis wears a decorated *chlamys*, but is otherwise naked with a phallos, in contrast to Pyronides, who is modestly garbed (Revermann (2006a) 318). Phrynis is thus a comic parody of the character type of Charinos on the earlier Pronomos vase, who also wears nothing more than a *chlamys* over the shoulders.

One further comic scene that may shed light on the use of the *lyra* is *Frogs* 1283–1295 in which Euripides mocks Aeschylus' use of the *kithara*.

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31 All translations are my own.

32 Salerno, Museo Provinciale Pc 1812, *RVP* 65.2/19.

33 He is mocked at *Clouds* 969–972 and Pherecrates fr. 155 (Kassel/Austin?) lists him as a violator of the personified Music. Proclus (*Chrestomathy* 320a Bekker) reports that Phrynis mixed hexameter and free verse and added strings to the *lyra*; see West (1992) 62–64; Storey (2000) 178. Phrynis' *kithara* on the Paestan vase has only six strings, though we should be careful not to overvalue this detail as evidence for the number of strings.

34 Green (2008) 213 and Piqueux (2006) question the connection. Goulaki-Voutira (1999) suggests a schoolboy being dragged to his lessons, but the costume is too elaborate, and a schoolboy would be expected to carry a *chelys lyra*, not a *kithara*. On *Demoi* in general, see Braun (2000); Storey (2000), (2003) 111–174; Telò (2003), (2007).

35 For further discussion on Phrynis' role in this play see Revermann (2006a) 318–319. Storey (1995–1996) 137–141 tentatively suggests assigning fr. 326, in which a character asks which kind of music, old or new, his interlocutor would like to hear.

Figure 5. Phrynis and Pyronides, perhaps a scene from Eupolis' *Demoi*; Paestan bell krater, attributed to Asteas; mid-fourth century; Salerno, Museo Provinciale Pc 1812.

ὅπως ᾿Αχαιῶν δίθρονον κράτος,
    ῾Ελλάδος ἥβας
τοφλαττοθρατφλαττοθρατ
Σφίγγα, δυσαμεριᾶν πρύτανιν κύνα, πέμπει,
τοφλαττοθρατφλαττοθρατ,
ξὺν δορὶ καὶ χερὶ πράκτορι θούριος ὄρνις,
τοφλαττοθρατφλαττοθρατ,
κυρεῖν παρασχὼν ἰταμαῖς κυσὶν
    ἀεροφοίτοις,
τοφλαττοθρατφλαττοθρατ,
τὸ συγκλινές τ᾽ ἐπ᾽ Αἴαντι,
τοφλαττοθρατφλαττοθρατ.

How the double-throned power of the Greeks,
the prime of Hellas,
TOPHLAT TOTHRAT TOPHLAT TOTHRAT!
sends the Sphinx, chief dog of bad times,
TOPHLAT TOTHRAT TOPHLAT TOTHRAT!
handing over to the power of eager,
sky-roving dogs,
TOPHLAT TOTHRAT TOPHLAT TOTHRAT!
the group leaning on Ajax
TOPHLAT TOTHRAT TOPHLAT TOTHRAT!

Part of Euripides' criticism is that the music is derivative of low-brow sources, ἱμονιοστρόφου μέλη 'a water-drawer's song', as Dionysus calls it (1297). The lines sung by Euripides are a pastiche of Aeschylean lyric: *Agamemnon* 108–111 with partial lines from *Sphinx* (fr. 236 Radt), *Thracian Women* (fr. 84 R), and a third, unknown play (fr. 282 R, possibly *Memnon*). As choral lyric, these lines would necessitate an aggressive, louder sound from the *kithara*, hence the uppercase letters in my translation above. Though we must account for comic exaggeration, Euripides' ridicule is founded on several assumptions. The apparent compatibility of tragic lyric with satyr play (*Sphinx*), for instance, suggests an aural resemblance between the two genres, even if there is a dissonance between the two genres.[36] The intermezzo quality of the passage is also suggestive, implying that lines punctuated (abrasively, according to Euripides) by loud plucking or strumming is the only accompaniment for a choral group.[37]

Some modern editors of *Frogs* print φλαττοθραττοφλαττοθρατ for the recurring phrase, omitting the initial το of the manuscript tradition, supposing a scribal error which duplicated the definite article from line 1296, where Dionysus asks τί τὸ φλαττοθρατ τοῦτ' ἐστίν; 'What is this phlattothrat?'[38] Sommerstein justifies the excision of το by suggesting it would interfere with the onomatopoeia, which he assumes represents picking of the *lyra* strings.[39] But this excision is not necessary to make sense of the line, and may indeed

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[36] There were still significant differences in the structure and presentation of satyric and tragic choruses, see Seidensticker (2003).

[37] A similar onomatopoeic phrase, θρετταvελο, occurs at *Wealth* 290, when Cario imitates the *Cyclops* dithyramb of Philoxenus. The chorus strophically repeat the phrase at 296.

[38] The excision dates from Kock's 1898 edition, and is followed by Dover (1993) and Sommerstein (1996a).

[39] Judging onomatopoetic representations can be tricky business: cultural interpretations of sounds surely change over time. Consider the variety of noises a pig makes, based on his nationality: oink oink (English), groin groin (French), knor knor (Dutch), nöff nöff (Swedish), boo boo (Japanese), and, of course, *koï koï* in Aristophanes (*Ach.* 780, 800–803).

come at the cost of a joke. There are two possibilities for the questionable το. One is that it is included as a definite article preceding an onomatopoetic noun (το φλαττοθρατ) or nouns (το φλατ το θρατ). Thus, Euripides interrupts lines of Aeschylean lyric with 'The PHLAT! The THRAT! The PHLAT! The THRAT!' Dionysus misunderstands Euripides' cries and combines them into a single onomatopoetic phrase: 'What tophlattothrat is this?' The second possibility is that the το is part of the onomatopoetic phrase. A fragment of a clay epinetron from the early fifth century lends support to this idea. It depicts an Amazonian trumpeter accompanying the arming of other Amazons.[40] Surrounding the trumpeter are the syllables τοτη τοτοτε.[41] The most likely interpretation is that these are unsophisticated onomatopoetic representations of the sounds of the trumpet.[42] Clearly the το of a trumpet would produce a different sound than the το of a *kithara*, but this fragment does imbue το with an onomatopoetic value. Consider the versatility of the English syllables 'da' and 'dum' which might be used to imitate almost any style of music from Classical to modern rock.

In either case, Euripides in *Frogs* presents his audience with a repeated onomatopoetic pattern, 'tophlattothrat', 'the phalttothrat', or 'the phlat, the thrat'. If we retain the το of the manuscripts in the recurring phrase we have five lines balanced with two (iambic) halves each. Such repetition, both within the phrase itself and the recurrence of the line, suggests a repetitive, less variable action, either a picking action (with the onomatopoetic το representing the initial strike of the plectrum on the string and the φλατ/θρατ the resultant twanging?) or a strumming motion, perhaps as two passes of the *plectrum* per phrase, or four per line. For a *lyra* in competition with a chorus, even in an intermezzo structure, louder strumming may be more appropriate.

About Euripides' use of the *lyra*, we know little. Aeschylus in *Frogs* accuses him of deriving his songs from low places: πορνῳδιῶν, σκολίων Μελήτου, Καρικῶν αὐλημάτων, θρήνων, χορειῶν, 'whore songs, drinking songs by Miletus, Carian pipe tunes, dirges, and dances' (*Frogs* 1301–1303)—in other

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[40] Eleusis inv. 907.

[41] This is the usual order of the syllables given, though the arrangement of letters in the image leaves room for doubt. The first two syllables, τοτη, appear to the trumpeter's right, and slightly above her. The second set, τοτοτε, appear to her left, and below her.

[42] So Pöhlmann and West (2001) 8. See Bélis (1984), who attempts to correlate the syllables with a solmization scale representing individual notes (as with the English sequence do-re-mi) attested in Aristides Quintilianus of the third century CE, but this seems needlessly complicated for an epinetron (a knee guard used while sewing).

words, from all the places one might encounter pipe music inappropriate to tragedy. These derogatory sources are part of an attack on Euripides (and his counterparts) as a practitioner of the New Music, which saw the application to the *lyra* of playing methods developed on the *aulos*.[43] We can reasonably assume the appearance or accompaniment of a *lyra* in Euripides for two plays: *Antiope* and (less certainly) *Hypsipyle*. Each featured a character associated with the *lyra*, Amphion and Orpheus' son Euneus respectively, and fr. 188 Kannicht of *Antiope* includes an injunction to Amphion from his brother Zethus to stop playing. Each of these situations suggests not a choral performance as mocked in *Frogs*, but rather a solo, virtuoso singing performance accompanied by a *kitharistês*, in keeping with the practices of the New Music.

My final case studies are the two plays of Sophocles known to have featured a *lyra* on stage: *Ichneutai* and *Thamyras*. Neither is fully extant. For the former, we must rely chiefly on papyrus scraps, fragmentary but closer to the original performance and perhaps more dramaturgically functional.[44] For the latter, the evidence is primarily visual and anecdotal but grants some speculative scope.

Sophocles' satyr-play *Ichneutai* (date unknown) is perhaps (despite its fragmentary state of preservation) the best-known example of a *lyra* being used in a performance. That it was seen on stage is certain, though the extant fragments directly account only for it being heard. The play is modelled on the 'Homeric' *Hymn to Hermes*. Silenus and the satyr chorus agree to find the stolen cattle of Apollo in return for their freedom. At least twice during their search the newly invented *lyra* sounds out, and the chorus question the nymph Cyllene, nurse to the infant Hermes. Cyllene describes the *chelys lyra* and must have explained its construction (likely in the *lacunae* at 287–295 and 312–325). The conclusion of the play is lost, but fragments suggest the re-appearance of Apollo, who must have received the *lyra* as a gift. We know little of musical practices in satyr-play, but a virtuoso performance by Apollo (or perhaps Hermes), accompanied by the *lyra*, would make a fine finish to the play (and the day's tetralogy).[45]

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43 For the origins of the New Music in the *aulos*, see Csapo (2004b) 216–221. See also Landels (1999) 29–30.

44 Consider, for example, *P.Oxy*. 4546, most likely a rehearsal script for a single actor; see Marshall (2004).

45 Although the patterns of choral song and dance would have differed from tragedy (see Seidensticker (2003) 108–117), there is ample evidence that the professional *aulêtês* also accompanied this performance. An *aulêtês* prepares to accompany a satyric actor (identified

The existing fragments twice preserve responses to the sound of the *lyra*. Both are accompanied by some unusual notation in the script. In the first instance, the chorus have been sniffing about like dogs when they are interrupted: the papyrus records υ [υ] υ υ (131; diacritical marks, though found elsewhere on the papyrus, are omitted). Silenus, apparently unaware of the interruption, describes the chorus' terrified reaction. He rebukes and mocks the chorus, but his turn comes when the chorus describe his reaction to the interjection υ υ υ ψ ψ α α (176). The meaning of these letters is not certain, though Hunt's original suggestion when he published the papyrus in 1912, that these are noises made by the chorus ('sundry noises of alarm and encouragement' in Lloyd-Jones' Loeb translation), is the generally accepted interpretation. As supporting evidence, Hunt cites Aristophanes' *Wealth* 895, 'where ὓ ὖ, repeated six times, is used to imitate the sound made by [the sycophant] smelling a feast' (Hunt (1912) 73). Likewise Silenus exclaims ἆ ἆ ἆ upon first smelling Odysseus' wine in *Cyclops* (157). The use of ψ, however, is without precedent in drama.

In *Ichneutai* both interjections are followed by reactions to the sound of a *lyra*. More likely, then, is that these notations are meant to allow for sound effects in the performance script. The three letters υ ψ α do not correspond to any known musical notation nor to the names of *lyra* strings, though they must have meant something. One possible solution is to see these characters as abbreviations. As the psis are unusual (extra-metrical interjections tend to be vocalic in Greek drama), they are the best place to start.[46] One possibility is ψάλλων 'strumming' or ψαλμός 'a strumming' as a rare stage direction (after the use of ψάλλων at *Knights* 522). If so, we might suggest ὑποψάλλων 'gentle strumming' and ἀποψάλλων 'strumming away' (a louder sound?) for υ and α respectively. Neither word is known until the second century CE (Philostratus uses both)—but then this is the approximate date of our papyrus. Such a nomenclature would allow for an intensifying progression (both louder and funnier) as the chorus encounter the sounds of the *lyra*. A series of soft strummings are not heard by Silenus at first, but as the sound escalates, he

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by his decorated and phallos-equipped shorts) who is already dancing on a late 4th century vase (Athens NM 13027, *ARV*^{2} 1180.2). Elsewhere we see 'real' satyrs (i.e. naked, without actors' shorts) dancing to the music of an *aulêtês*, where the satyrs are more in the mythic mode than the performance-conscious mode (e.g. Boston MFA 03.788, *ARV*^{2} 571. 75, where the satyrs carry pieces of furniture, and Ferrara 3031, in which satyrs raise a goddess from the underworld by beating the ground with hammers; both vases are Attic and from the first half of the fifth century).

[46] Line 136 may also have a ψ; the second letter is completely lost.

is even more frightened than the chorus.[47] As with the passage from *Frogs* above, the *lyra* is not being played while the chorus sing; instead the sound interrupts the flow of the spoken verse. Further, the plot demands a *chelys lyra*. It was likely not played on stage, nor would it have been played inside the *skēnē* as the satyrs claim: the audience would not be able to hear it clearly. A *kithara* player on or near the stage, visible to all but representing an off-stage *chelys lyra*, is more likely.

Sophocles had a reputation for musical skill (Athenaeus 1.20e–f):

> Σοφοκλῆς δὲ πρὸς τῷ καλὸς γεγενῆσθαι τὴν ὥραν ἦν καὶ ὀρχηστικὴν δεδιδαγμένος καὶ μουσικὴν ἔτι παῖς ὢν παρὰ Λάμπρῳ. μετὰ γοῦν τὴν ἐν Σαλαμῖνι ναυμαχίαν περὶ τρόπαιον γυμνὸς ἀληλιμμένος ἐχόρευσε μετὰ λύρας· οἱ δὲ ἐν ἱματίῳ φασί. καὶ τὸν Θάμυριν διδάσκων αὐτὸς ἐκιθάρισεν· ἄκρως δὲ ἐσφαίρισεν, ὅτε τὴν Ναυσικάαν καθῆκε.
>
> Sophocles, in addition to being good looking in his youth, was also taught dancing and music while still a child by Lamprus. After the sea battle at Salamis he, naked and oiled, danced to the *lyra* about the monument. Others say he was dressed. He himself played the *lyra* when he produced *Thamyris*; further, he played ball exceedingly well, when he played Nausicaa.

Despite the poet's impressive ball-playing skills (also in the *scholia* to Homer, Eust. *Il.* 381.8 and *Od.* 1553.63), he was commemorated on the *Stoa Poikile* with *kithara* in hand (*Vita* 5):

> Φασὶ δὲ ὅτι καὶ κιθάραν ἀναλαβὼν ἐν μόνῳ τῷ Θαμύριδι ποτε ἐκιθάρισεν, ὅθεν καὶ ἐν τῇ ποικίλῃ στοᾷ μετὰ κιθάρας αὐτὸν γεγράφθαι.
>
> And they say that he once took up the *kithara* and played in his Thamyris only, whence he was even painted on the Painted Stoa with a *kithara*.

These anecdotes are 'meant as representations of the poet's heroic stature' (Lefkowitz (1981) 77). The references to *Thamyras* are, however, credible. Sophocles gave up performing in his own tragedies as his voice was too weak (*Vita* 4, διὰ τὴν ἰδίαν μικροφωνίαν). Playing the *kithara* in accompaniment to the Thamyras actor would make sense: Sophocles composed the music, after all, and perhaps his playing saved the *khorēgos* the cost of a *kitharistês*.

Thamyras was a Thracian *kitharôidos* known for his hubristic challenge to the Muses. After losing a musical contest, he was blinded (the story is also referenced by the Muse in *Rhesus* 916–925).[48] We have no other mention

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[47] Another possibility might be ὑλάων 'barking' for υ, relevant since the chorus and Silenus are acting like and referring to dogs. But in this case I do not know what α or ψ would stand for.

[48] There is no evidence from the existing fragments that Thamyras demanded sexual

of this image (Pausanias does not include it in his description of the Stoa), but the story of Thamyras and his contest with the Muses was a popular theme for Athenian vase painters of the later fifth century.[49] *LIMC* lists eight vases that treat the theme in the fifth century, plus one Apulian krater of the fourth, iconographically consistent with the earlier images.[50] Only one shows Thamyras throwing away his *lyra*, apparently blinded after the contest, though this is only indicated by his closed eyes: there is no blood and the look on his face is peaceful (*figure 6*).[51] The *lyra* in this image is also slightly odd: it has the flat bottom and curved posts of the Thracian *lyra*, but the outline and curves of a *chelys lyra* on the sound box. Other vases show either a *chelys lyra* or *kithara*, but the iconography is otherwise consistent enough to suggest a common influence (Nercessian (1990) 904).

For two of these images, the influence of the original performance can be detected. The first shows Thamyras seated before a female, presumably his mother Argiope, while two Muses stand behind him.[52] Argiope is not named, but rather is labelled with the inscription *Euaion kalos* 'Euaion is beautiful.' This is thought to be a reference (since at least Owen [1936] 150) to the son of Aeschylus, known to have performed as a tragic actor (two women to the left of Thamyras are labelled *choronika*, 'victorious in the chorus'). Twice elsewhere the name of Euaion (once explicitly identified as the son of Aeschylus) is found labelling mythical figures on Attic vases, suggesting he played other roles.[53] All three vases date to the 440s BCE. If the label does

access to all nine Muses should he win the contest, as in other versions. The Middle Comedy poet Antiphanes also wrote a *Thamyras*, but only one fragment, concerning the quality of Strymonian eels, survives (fr. 105 Kassel-Austin).

49 On the popularity of Thamyras in the fifth and fourth centuries, see P. Wilson (2009b), who also gives detailed analysis of the ten surviving fragments of Sophocles' play. See also Power (2010) 48–50, 205–209, 254–257, 300–301.

50 In addition to the vases discussed in detail below, images of the following can be found in *LIMC*: Vatican 16549; Naples, Nat. Mus. 81531 (H 3143); Ruvo, Mus. Jatta J 1538; Palermo Mormino 385; (and under other headings) Ferrara Museo Nazionale 3033; New York MMA 16.52; Basel, Antikenmuseum BS 462. Two more can be found in other sources: Athens Nat. Mus. 19636 is in Philippaki 1988; and the final image is in a private collection, but Marcadé 1982 provides a full report.

51 Oxford Ash. Mus. G 291, *ARV*² 1061.152. Pausanias also describes a statue on the Helicon (9.30.2) and a painting at Delphi (10.30.8) depicting the blinded Thamyras. Pollux 4.141 lists a special Thamyras mask, with one blue eye and one black eye, that may have been used on stage for the character before and after blinding.

52 Vatican, Museo Etrusco Gregoriano 16549, *ARV*² 1020.92.

53 He is found playing the role of Perseus, presumably in Sophocles' *Andromeda* (Agrigento AG 7; both this and the Thamyras vase are attributed to the Phiale Painter) and the role of Actaeon, possibly in his father Aeschylus' *Toxotides* (Boston 00.346), see Trendall and Webster

Figure 6. Thamyras, apparently blinded, throwing away his lyre; red figure hydria, 440–420; Oxford Ash. Mus. G 291.

identify Euaion in the Argiope role, a fusion has taken place in which the identity of the tragic actor has imposed itself on the mythological character. By the same token, it is tempting to consider the identity behind the character of Thamyras as Sophocles himself, but at some critical distance.[54] *Vita* 5 suggests not that Sophocles played the part of Thamyras, but merely that he played the *kithara* (and μόνῳ 'only' indicates a unique performance at that). The portrayal of Thamyras as a young man with a *chelys lyra* is surely not a metatheatrical portrait of the actor and his instrument. We would not, after all, assume that Euaion ordinarily looked like a matronly, white-haired Muse. But this metatheatrical fusion might affect our understanding of another vase.

(1971) 62–64. Seven other vases include 'Euaion *kalos*' without mythological or performative context, and two more name him without *kalos* (these last two are attributed to the Lykaon painter, same as the Actaeon vase above), see *ARV*² 1579.

[54] Hall (2002) 9–10.

Figure 7. A bearded Thamyris playing the kithara; red figure amphora, c 430; Saint-Petersburg Hermitage Б 1638.

One other image breaks with the iconography of the others, an Attic red figure amphora (*figure 7*), which depicts an older bearded man playing a *kithara* (the others are all beardless, as in *figure 6*).[55] This is also the only surviving image in which Thamyras holds the concert instrument rather than the smaller mythical instrument. The straightforward identification of Thamyras must therefore be questioned, and I wonder if this image is not then a unique conflation of the myth and the tragic performance. The character of Thamyras, seated in his mythical context, has assumed features (beard, *kithara*) of the *kitharistês* (Sophocles himself?) who played the instrument in performance. It is possible that the potter is imposing the features of the *kitharistês* unconsciously, slipping out of the iconographic tradition of the mythic scene and imposing photographic details of a performance he has seen. We should not consider this vase to be a portrait of the *kitharistês*: it is only the broad features of the musician that have been imposed, not his actual likeness. The Pronomos vase shows us that when musicians do appear in vases, it is an idealized version, not an actual likeness that

[55] St. Petersburg, Ermitage Б 1638, *ARV*^{2} 1123.6.

appears. Nevertheless, this image is a unique synthesis of mythical and performative aspects, in which a metatheatrical figure—the musician in a tragic performance—has been substituted for a character within the world of the myth.

Although relatively rare on the performative soundscape of Greek theatre, the *lyra* makes some significant appearances. In artistic representations, visual and theatrical, it occupies an interstitial position, a meeting place for aural and visual, the myth and the performance. Time has of course broadened this space, since the ancient *lyra* now exists only as image or text, not as sound. The *lyra* has returned to silence, like the tortoise whence Hermes crafted the first of its kind. It is at once stage property and performer, and in both capacities certainly enriched the theatrical experience.

BLOODY (STAGE) BUSINESS: MATTHIAS LANGHOFF'S *SPARAGMOS* OF EURIPIDES' *BACCHAE* (1997)*

Gonda Van Steen

> [T]here are manifestly many different possible intentions behind the act of adaptation: the urge to consume and erase the memory of the adapted text or to call it into question is as likely as the desire to pay tribute by copying.
>
> (Linda Hutcheon (2006) 7)

> Suffering may well evoke such admirable values as dignity, courage and endurance, but it would be pleasant if one could stumble upon some less excruciating method of exercising them.
>
> (Terry Eagleton (2003) 34)

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I. *Moving Target: Re(dis)covering Road Stop Thebes*

What is Thebes all about in light of Euripides' *Bacchae*? For the ancient Athenians, Thebes was the mythical home of the founder Cadmus, his daughter Agave, and his grandson, the young king Pentheus. Thebes was the destination of the god Dionysus, also a grandson to Cadmus (via his daughter Semele), who returned to establish his divinity and to spread his mystery rites. Thebes was therefore a point of departure, too, for the *thiasoi* of Maenads or Bacchae, cult groups of female followers of Dionysus, which set out from the city to nearby mountains to celebrate the ecstatic Dionysiac rituals in close contact with, and in the privacy of, unspoiled nature. Thebes was the familiar stranger, being the theatrical counterpart or mirror of ancient Athens, as Froma Zeitlin has argued (1990). But what is Thebes to the modern visitor? And how does one now even begin to conjure up visual images of Thebes, when so little of the ancient city has been preserved?

Thebes today is rarely a destination per se. The *Blue Guide Greece* describes the town: "there are hardly any visible remains sufficiently important to excite the interest or awaken the enthusiasm of the visitor" (Barber (1990) 406). For tourists whose real destination is Delphi, Thebes is too close to Athens for a first stop, especially when scenic mountain villages, such as Arachova, await. Those headed north on the *Ethnike Odos*, or the National Road, stop at beach resorts with modern facilities. Only the classicist or archaeologist with specialized interests is likely to seek out Thebes in *Thiva*. Everyone else drives on at full speed.

It was precisely that impression of the nondescript provincial town of Thiva that director Matthias Langhoff sought to conjure up. Dreary Thebes became the new protagonist of his 1997 version of Euripides' *Bacchae*.[1] Thiva was the stamping ground for new tragic characters, who seemed

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[1] The *Bacchae* could not possibly be the same play when set in a different locale. Nonetheless, it is hard to explain how a cityscape might become the protagonist of a play. However, readers who have seen Woody Allen's *Manhattan* or the 2003 film *Lost in Translation*, directed by Sofia Coppola and set in Tokyo, may see a parallel with the omnipresence of a modern city in the picture. Places with a symbolic or metaphorical value seem to become tantamount to characters (albeit *mutae personae*) also in some older English-language novels (such as those by the Brontë sisters and by Luisa May Alcott). The poetry of Constantine Cavafy, on the other hand, is haunted by the city of Alexandria (ancient as well as modern), which, again, is much more than an evocative backdrop. Canadian director Ned Dickens conjured up a post-apocalyptic Thebes in a seven-play cycle called *City of Wine* (2009) that was inspired by both Sophocles and Seneca and offered visceral comments on modern social and political ills.

determined to do anything except "othering" Thebes. Thiva was omnipresent in all its ugliness and dreariness, and there was nothing distant or invented about it. For Langhoff, Thebes was not where the text and the classical ideal lead the reader or spectator. Thebes was where a road sign pointed—and sidetracked—the modern visitor, whose high-brow expectations could only be severely shaken. This Thebes guided Langhoff's conception of how Euripides' tragedy could pivot on bold visual choices, or on the unexpected dimensions of *opsis*. Other powerful instruments in the director's "toolkit" of *opsis* proved to be character sketches, costumes, sets, and props. All the visual components of the modern production seemed to be inspired, however, by the question of what these components would look like if they had appeared in today's Thiva. The same held true for the aural aspects of the play, such as the actors' idioms and the musical scores, which again seemed plucked out of the modern road stop, only to reinforce the striking to shocking images. The State Theater of Northern Greece presented the tragedy in the modern Greek translation of Thodoros Stephanopoulos, but the choice of one translation over another did not prevent the actors from coloring their diction in personal ways.

Imagine the ancient theater of Epidaurus one balmy summer night in August of 1997: the seating area is filled with thousands of spectators, who anticipate that the well-known director will bring to them another classic version of Euripides' *Bacchae*. Minutes into the show, spectators start walking out. Shouts of "*Aischos*" ("Shame" or "Disgrace") go up from various quarters. Debate about the production erupts—and, to this day, it occasionally re-ignites. Langhoff's *Bacchae* is always counted among the "scandal" productions of the past decades. What happened?

So many shocking facets of *opsis* marked Langhoff's visual conception of the play that it had the Greeks resort to terms like "sacrilege" to describe the alleged "desecration" of the Epidaurus Theater. Such accusations remind us that many Greeks think of ancient tragedy and its language as if they were classical or religious monuments in need of active protection, both by the state and by every responsible citizen. Even though ancient plays could hardly be more pagan, they must be protected from being "desecrated" or "befouled."[2] *Opsis* may have opened a path to innovation in fifth-century BCE

2 For an analysis of the complex Language Question (*Glossiko Zetema*), which partially constituted the ideological background to the outcry, see Beaton (1999) 296–365, and Horrocks (1997) 344–348. The Language Question, or the decades-long struggle to determine a national language, was perhaps the most poignant expression of the uncertainty about modern Greek identity. The nineteenth-century Greek intelligentsia advanced the artificially reconstructed

Athens (as in the evolution of stagecraft from Aeschylus to Aristophanes) but, for the conservative spectator of the 1997 Epidaurus Festival, *opsis* had to adhere to the conformism of "proper" images and portrayals. Also, viewers with preconceived notions expected to partake in the "appropriate" and preferably domestic Greek *ap-opsis* (*apopse*) or "outlook" or "viewpoint" on classical drama. First, I will analyze how Langhoff's radical *opsis* affected characters, settings, and props. Then I will explain how the scandal erupted because of the clash of traditions and cultures that the *opsis* of his production encapsulated.

Langhoff brought a production of Euripides' *Bacchae* that was drenched in blood—literally—and that featured a nude Dionysus and half-naked Bacchae. Even though the tenor of Euripides' tragedy has been an object of debate among classical scholars, most agree that the playwright was not after blood or sensation.[3] But Langhoff had also undergone the influences of Seneca and of the Elizabethan Theatre of Blood (via his keen interest in Shakespeare's works).[4] He strongly defended his directorial choices and had already hinted

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register of the Kathareuousa over the vernacular (even though there were many shades to the Demotike, including literary and other written forms), in order to address the ideological needs of the nation-building project, with its many stakes vested in historical continuity and pure lineage. In the largely uncharted domain of state-subsidized revival tragedy of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, this question boiled down to the director's—or the institution's—choice between delivering the text in the original ancient Greek or using a translation in Kathareuousa, by then the official idiom of the state, the bureaucracy, and formal education. Both the choices of ancient Greek and Kathareuousa, however, were far from presenting viable theatrical options. The riots with which the 1903 *Oresteia* production was received, or the clashes between conservative students and the police out to protect enthusiastic spectators, have gone down in history as a narrowly national issue, as nationalist rows symptomatic of the linguistic fanaticism that fueled the Greek Language Question. The two main objects of contestation between progressive, demoticizing translation and linguistic dogma, the Christian scriptures and pagan classical tragedy, were often conjoined as victims beset by the common enemy of pedantic linguistic conservatism. This sweeping alliance of Christian and pagan was part and parcel of the nation-building construct of the much-heralded Helleno-Christian civilization, a construct created in the latter half of the nineteenth century only to fall to rampant abuse during the middle decades of the twentieth century. An academic shift to the study of broader issues of Greek national identity, of which performance, translation, and language remain constitutive elements, has been long overdue. See recently, however, Mackridge (2009), who has placed this complicated topic squarely within some of its (wide-ranging) social as well as political dimensions.

[3] Among the recent book-length studies of Euripides' *Bacchae* in English are Mills (2006) and Thumiger (2007). For a theoretical perspective on the power of adaptation, see Hutcheon (2006).

[4] This cross-fertilization between works and traditions that have captured Langhoff's interest and that affect, first and foremost, the *opsis* of his stage, has been acknowledged in a recent announcement of the director's work with the Hungarian State Theater (2010):

at them in interviews which he gave prior to the opening production. It angered some of those who interviewed him in the subsequent commotion that he stood by his "shock-tactics" based on the use of provocative stage images. Some of the director's more incendiary comments inflamed Greek public opinion and generated a lot of media coverage, which offers today's student the advantage of fuller (and unfiltered) "access" to the production.[5] Most of the theatrical reviews that were published in the immediate aftermath of the scandal voiced sharp resistance against Langhoff's innovations.[6] As the months and years went by, however, Greek sensibilities evolved and critical appreciation grew for the boldness of the director's experiment.[7] The subsequent discussions about the premiere and its further performances also opened up occasions for metatheatrical commentary to reflect on what had happened. At the opening of a later performance, for instance, actor Menas

> Langhoff is radical and surprising as a stage director, while his work is perfectly rigorous. Part of his esthetics consists in saturating the stage with signs, using various means: photography, film screening, references to other theatrical or cinematographic works, interactivity, very elaborated sets and costumes. (Anonymous at http://www.fnt.ro/en/matthias-langhoff-and-rodrigo-garcia-at-ntf-2010.html).

[5] Mauromoustakos (1998) positioned his negative critique of Langhoff's production against older scandals that denigrated the "prestige" of the Athens and Epidaurus Festivals, such as Karolos Koun's 1959 production of Aristophanes' *Birds* (for which, see Van Steen (2000) ch. 4).

[6] The titles of some of the reviews are very telling, and I cite a few here with their full references instead of relegating them to the general bibliography:

Chatzeioannou, E.D. 1997. "Both Cheers and Jeers for the *Bacchae*" (in Greek), *Ta Nea*, 30 August.

Chrestides, M. 1997. "A Boring Bit of Nonsense" (in Greek), *Eleutherotypia*, 1 September.

Georgakopoulou, V. 1997. "After the Storm …" (in Greek), *Eleutherotypia*, 1 September.

Georgousopoulos, K. 1997. "Bubbles without History" (in Greek), *Ta Nea*, 2 September.

———. 1997. "Kitsch Kebab" (in Greek), *Ta Nea*, 1 September.

Lotsopoulou, G. 1997. "Disgrace and Shame for the *Bacchae* of the State Theater of Northern Greece" (in Greek), *Exousia*, 21 August.

Loverdou, M. 1997. "Theatergoers against Theater" (in Greek), *To Vema*, 7 September.

Myrtsiote, G. 1997. "The *Bacchae* as a Joke by Langhoff" (in Greek), *He Kathemerine*, 21 August.

Pankoureles, V. 1997. "The Fascism of Provocation" (in Greek), *Eleutheros Typos*, 1 September.

Papathemeles, S. 1997. "*Bacchae* and Macedonians" (in Greek), *Eleutherotypia*, 3 September.

[7] Hardwick (1999) draws attention to the advantages and disadvantages of using reviews as primary sources in performance reception. More than a decade has passed since Langhoff's production. In that perspective, Hardwick's observation on how reviews shape and mediate the subsequent discussion of a play is particularly apt: "the role of reviewers can play a crucial mediating function between theatrical intention and the cultural transformation which results not only from witnessing the play but from reading discussions of it" (with reference to Yvonne Banning).

Chatzesavvas, who played also the first Dionysus, comes on-stage naked but hovering over and bellowing in the dark. He is, in fact, barely visible. When he moves into sight to the front of the stage, he pretends to become prudishly self-conscious of his nudity. He promptly puts on a conventional shirt and pants, in a metatheatrical reflection on the way his nakedness was denounced by theater-goers who attended earlier performances of Langhoff's *Bacchae*. Thus the production signals a self-reflexive understanding of the historicity of its own *opsis*.[8]

II. Opsis (*on the*) *Offense: Crude Culture off the* Ethnike Odos

Characters, sets, and props blend together in Langhoff's radical reconceptualization of Semele, the mythical and mortal mother of Dionysus and sister of Agave, queen of Thebes. Her tomb takes the form of a shrine set in the middle of the stage. It is hardly larger than a display cabinet, and it is treated like one of the roadside memorial shrines that dot every dangerous bend of the road in the Greek landscape. A small oil lamp is left burning inside this shrine, and a sign above reads in Greek "ΤΑΦΟΣ ΣΕΜΕΛΗΣ." The posted equivalent sign in English, "SEMELE'S TOMB," accommodates any tourist who might stumble in looking for ancient Thebes.

Dionysus' terrifying power, which will cause the Maenads to rip apart, first, animals and later spying villagers and also king Pentheus, is instantly made palpable on stage. Langhoff has literalized the *sparagmos*: big slabs of dripping meat hang down from hooks that rotate on a conveyor belt, which moves from the back to the front of the stage and back again. This "décor" reminds any Greek of wholesale meat markets or large butcher's shops—places that are not for the faint of heart. Langhoff leaves the audience with a sense of overkill, with more meat and blood than a society can or should consume. The director thus presents a commodified and sensationalized *sparagmos*, with the full shock value of dripping blood that prefigures the harsh treatment that awaits Pentheus the voyeur and that makes a cruel mockery of his female attire. However, the mass meat consumption

[8] Many Greeks vividly remember the stir caused by a 1989 production of *Oedipus Rex* staged at Epidaurus by the Georgian director Robert Sturua (in collaboration with the Kareze-Kazakos Theater Company). Anna Makrake played the messenger and, as she announced the news of Jocasta's suicide and of Oedipus' blinding, she lit a cigarette on-stage. In subsequent performances, Makrake simply pulled out a handkerchief and wiped her brow with it. I owe this parallel to Vayos Liapis. For a brief mention of the incident, see also Mauromoustakos (2010).

Figure 1. Langhoff's meat market at the opening of his production of the *Bacchae* of Euripides. Dionysus, who has come on naked, is getting dressed in conventional clothes in front of the memorial shrine for his mother Semele. Reproduced with the permission of "Desmi," the "Centre for the Ancient Greek Drama Research and Practical Applications."

symbolizes also the indiscriminate tourist consumption. As one Greek theater student told me, "a road-trip out of Athens is for many Greeks and foreigners the perfect occasion for mass food consumption, whether at the souvlaki joints of the Corinth Canal or at the grills that line the coastal roads. Many of the spectators present at Epidaurus had just set out on their road-trip and had seen or done the same. No wonder they were not amused. The parallel was just too close for comfort."[9]

Langhoff's closing scene, too, luxuriates in blood: Agave pieces the limbs of Pentheus together at the front of the stage. It is the arresting culmination

[10] The figures included in this chapter are taken from a DVD recording of a later performance of the play, after it had moved indoors. Langhoff had by then toned down some of the more provocative elements of the production, but there was still plenty that raised eyebrows.

Figure 2. Pentheus reduced to roadkill at the finale of Langhoff's *Bacchae*. Reproduced with the permission of "Desmi," the "Centre for the Ancient Greek Drama Research and Practical Applications."

of a performance that has consistently juxtaposed action and physicality. By the play's end, Pentheus is the quintessential victim of a dysfunctional modern Greek family. The key exponent of this dysfunctionality is Agave, whose movements are clumsy and angular and whose Greekness is highly questionable. Agave's short dress and big hair accentuate her grotesque appearance. The female lead was played by the French actress Evelyne Didi, who spoke only broken modern Greek. Some of the spectators took issue with her mispronounced, chopped-up Greek. Other members in the audience, however, understood Didi's language to be yet another aspect subservient to the production's overall *opsis* and the director's *apopsis*—that of literal, social, and linguistic butchering.[11]

[11] For a different view, see Ioannides (2007) 137: "It was ... the poor Greek of Agaue [*sic*] that made the audience of Epidaurus ... blast into general disapprovals".

Figure 3. The chorus women scrubbing the floor while listening to their radios. Some have walked off to take a cigarette break. Reproduced with the permission of "Desmi," the "Centre for the Ancient Greek Drama Research and Practical Applications."

Langhoff's chorus consists of a small group of young women, who are made to look and act like suburban housewives at first, but who take on individual personalities later. Their music, song, and dance are modern, as if they have been brought up on disco music and the latest Western hits. In Euripides' original, the chorus is a key player in bringing out the Eastern exoticism of Dionysus and his throng, because the group of Bacchae, with their Asiatic costumes and props, likely had a stronger dramatic presence than the one actor who played Dionysus. Exoticism, however, is not what characterizes the women of Langhoff's chorus. On the contrary, they are preoccupied with their domestic interests. The only kind of religious fanaticism that these "desperate housewives" know is the fervor with which they pursue the drama of the soap-opera that they themselves have chosen to live. This self-conscious play within the play is harsh and irrevocable, and Langhoff's verdict on the women, too, is unforgiving. *Opsis* here expresses the director's quasi-sociological analysis of provincial life in contemporary Greece, which

he sees as a path of no return. The stage has filled with societal images that some audience members, even years later, perceive to be a "degrading" or "exhibitionist" experience not only of the classical play but also of modern Greek ordinary life.

The seer Teiresias comes on as a limping and blind accordion player. He looks like an old street musician who might be playing for money in Greek town squares today. On stage, Teiresias is subjected to physical as well as verbal abuse by the brazen Pentheus, who is quick to make his terror tactics known. At one point, Pentheus, dressed in neo-Nazi military garb, comes back up hauling a jerry-can full of petrol. He brags that he will go and smoke out the Bacchae. His underlings, however, such as his servants who seize Dionysus on the mountain, show their reverence to the god, and they have little sympathy for their tyrannical master in the hour of his demise. Langhoff has slanted the play toward a black-and-white character portrayal, and he has made his choices in terms of *opsis* subservient to this depiction: Dionysus is favorably portrayed throughout the play, albeit as a profoundly bizarre character. Opposite him stands an obnoxious and arrogant, power-hungry Pentheus.

How does Langhoff make Mount Cithaeron visible on stage? The mountain southwest of Thebes exists on stage in the form of a huge raised billboard. It reminds the viewer of the giant billboards that litter the Greek countryside along the highways. Agave addresses her father Cadmus from the ramp in front of this billboard: from high up she displays her trophy, her son's head, which she at first fails to recognize, until Cadmus brings her back to her senses. Thus the billboard becomes the modern and suburban version of the *theologeion*, or the rooftop of the classical Greek stage building, on which a divine character might appear as a *deus ex machina* to deliver final resolutions. Langhoff's wild Agave, however, could not be further removed from a godlike character.

When Agave cannot immediately find her father Cadmus, she gives him a ring from a phone affixed to one of the wooden poles on stage. When Cadmus needs to recover from the shock of seeing his grandson Pentheus dismembered, one of the chorus women brings him a Greek coffee. Thus Langhoff's production is filled with props and other striking visual details that have shocked some spectators in their blatant "contemporizing";[12] other viewers, in turn, have found that the director showed consistency in overhauling the classical tragedy to make it truly modern.

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[12] I borrow the term "contemporizing" from Hardwick (1999), who has observed "the beginnings of impatience with 'contemporizing' productions" in Britain in the late 1990s.

Figure 4. Mount Cithaeron: a tall billboard brings the mountain to Thebes. Reproduced with the permission of "Desmi," the "Centre for the Ancient Greek Drama Research and Practical Applications."

It remains, however, hard to define Langhoff's theatrical style. Attempts at labeling the director's postmodern style have ranged from "realist" and "naturalist" to a "metatheatrical" commentary on naturalist conventions. Other critics have used terms such as "absurdist" and "surrealist." Above all, however, Langhoff's idiosyncratic style, which refuses to become culturally or historically specific, invites ongoing discussion.

III. *A Tradition in Greece and a Tradition of Greeks: Theater and Cultural Consciousness*

> And yet how many times does some poor dramatic writer not shout: "No, not like that" ..., when he is attending rehearsals and writhing in agony, contempt, rage and pain because the translation into material reality (which is necessarily someone else's) does not correspond to the ideal conception and execution that had begun with him and belongs to him alone.
> (Pirandello (1993 [1908]) 28; ed. and trans. Susan Bassnett and Jennifer Lorch)

Euripides could not have been the "poor dramatic writer" shouting at the sight of Langhoff's *Bacchae*. The outcry was that of critics and audiences speaking on behalf of the "Greek tradition." This outcry in the name of an ethnocentric cultural ideology deserves further analysis.

Some critics took issue with the visual exaggerations (as some of the titles of their reviews indicate).[13] Most critics and scholars, however, engaged with the question of whether, given the more conventional reception history of Euripides' *Bacchae* in modern Greece, the director should have stayed within the boundaries of that tradition.[14] Some went as far as to demand that this and any other foreign director be especially respectful of the Greek tradition, that is, even more so than native Greek directors, actors, and artists. The Greek audience of 1997 had been exposed to relatively few productions of Euripides' *Bacchae*, and none of them had been as radical as, for instance, the countercultural *Dionysus in 69* by director Richard Schechner.[15] The modern Greek reception of the *Bacchae* was, at first, overshadowed by revivals of other tragedies, those of Sophocles and Aeschylus, but also by, for instance, adaptations of Euripides' *Medea*. It is not that the Greeks were afraid of irrational bloodshed. If that had been the case, then Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and, again, Euripides' *Medea* would have met with little favor as well. What made the crucial difference then is that the *Medea*, for instance, had been staged in several neoclassical adaptations, mainly in French versions, and that such adaptations had paved the way for the nineteenth-century Greek rediscovery of the tragedy. The *Bacchae*, which did not stand out in any foreign adaptation, had fallen by the wayside for many decades.[16] Add to that

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[13] Adam, M. 1997. "Flirting with the Embarrassment of the Spectator" (in Greek), *Auge*, 2 September.

Apostolakes, S. 1997. "Naked Dionysus in Epidaurus," interview with Menas Chatzesavvas (in Greek), *Eleutherotypia*, 18 August.

Katsounake, M. 1997. "Langhoff: 'I do not want the audience to be bored'" (in Greek), *He Kathemerine*, 31 August.

Rialde, M. 1997. "The Cynical Insolence of Mr. Langhoff …" (in Greek), *Auge*, 10 August.

[14] See, for instance, Mauromoustakos (1998). For further examples, see:

Kontrarou-Rassia, N., et al. 1997. "Tirades against the *Bacchae* of Langhoff: Ten Artists Evaluate the Production—Eight Against, Two in Favor …" (in Greek), *Eleutherotypia*, 2 September.

Panas, M. 1997. "The *Bacchae* of Euripides according to Langhoff: '… not the worst production of your life!'" (in Greek), *To Onoma*, 27 August.

Varopoulou, E. 1997. "Langhoff the Foreigner as a Scapegoat" (in Greek), *To Vema*, 24 August.

———. 1997. "Praise of Scandals" (in Greek), *To Vema*, 7 September.

[15] This production is the Leitmotif and time marker of Hall, Macintosh and Wrigley (2004).

[16] Sideres' comprehensive study of 1976, the first historical survey of the reception of ancient drama in modern Greece (through 1932), mentions no substantial interest in or engagement with Euripides' *Bacchae*.

that many foreign adaptors had given preference to plays focusing on single characters, such as the *Medea*, *Electra*, *Iphigenia*, *Antigone*, and *Oedipus*. But the *Bacchae*, named for its Eastern chorus and not for its strange, effeminate god, did not fit that bill.

When compared to other classical plays, the *Bacchae* received a very late debut on the modern Greek stage, with the conservative 1950 production of Linos Karzes, which was mounted at the Herodes Atticus Theater. From the mid-1970s on, a steady trickle of more experimental Greek productions of the *Bacchae* appeared, and that trend continues to this day. Here, a crucial factor was the commitment shown to the play by some of the best-known Greek directors such as Spyros Euangelatos (1975) and Karolos Koun (1977). For both of them, innovation started with the visual aspects of the chorus, which became a free-moving—or free-whirling—group that embodied the Asiatic exoticism and feminine seductiveness that so obsessed and disgusted Pentheus. In 1995, two years before Langhoff brought his version to Epidaurus, the Greek director Nikos Paroikos and his Aegean Exodos Theater had highlighted the power and beauty of nature in a nonconventional production of the *Bacchae*. With considerable effort, the members of the company staged the play in a mountain shelter and on the slopes of Mt Cithaeron over the course of an entire day. Sometimes they began the performance in the evening and took an entire night on the mountains, to finish up in the early morning light through mid-morning, which is a time marker that Euripides, too, describes in his play. The company's name, Aegean Exodos (*Exodos Aigaiou*), stressed the connections between sea and land, including Eastern Mediterranean lands, and was particularly apt for an innovative approach to the *Bacchae*.[17] Paroikos reconceptualized the play as a rite of initiation set in unspoiled nature. This feeling for nature, dawn, and landscape that Euripides' original conjures up is perhaps the most underexplored facet of the ancient original in its modern staging.[18]

Langhoff is not a Greek, and the Greeks' love-hate relationship with foreign directors has a long and unpleasant history. This relationship is the recurring topic of Greek newspaper articles, with titles such as "Invasion of Foreigners in Epidaurus and at the Herodes Atticus Theater: Directors

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17 The meaning of *Exodos Aigaiou* is twofold: either "coming out of the Aegean" or "coming out into the Aegean" ("Aegean exit"). I owe this observation to Vayos Liapis.

18 Scholarly tradition has long claimed that Euripides composed and staged the *Bacchae* in Macedon (Aegae), once he had left Athens to seek refuge at the court of King Archelaus. There, too, he might have developed his keen sentiment for nature in a new, mountainous environment. See, however, Scullion (2003), who has cast serious doubt on the story of the playwright's "exile" and death in Macedon.

and Actors of Worldwide Renown Are Coming This Year [2002], Bringing 'Demons' to Our 'Proper' Greek Summer Festivals."[19] The ensuing friction resurfaces in discussions about scandal productions, and deserves further scholarly attention.[20] An odd premise of exceptionalism defines this charged relationship, to the effect that only Greeks are in close contact with the long tradition of staging ancient drama and that they have an "innate feel" for how it should be done.[21] Therefore, the modern Greek outlook or *apopsis* on the plays should be privileged or, at the very least, it should not be challenged or jeopardized by foreigners who cannot possibly fathom the full weight of classical drama staged in its "sacred" ancient venues. Neither can foreigners understand just how much national pride has been vested in such productions and in their physical settings. Any iconoclast interpretation of a classical tragedy, in particular, is doing just that: smashing an icon or symbol of Greek cultural capital (in Bourdieu's terms).[22] In this light, Langhoff's production became dangerously self-referential: the foreign director who tried to bring his anarchic (theater) rites to "small-town" Greece was like a Dionysus who attempted to convert Thebes to his destabilizing foreign rituals.

In the immediate aftermath of Langhoff's premiere, the theater critic Maria Katsounake ironized the perceived foreign assault on classical drama:

> We [the modern Greeks] know the ancient tragic playwrights better than anyone else. We have lived them, we have analyzed them, we have understood their thinking, their ideological and philosophical backgrounds. We have questioned ourselves and we have clashed over how to interpret them and, therefore, we have established ownership over them in the superlative degree. In the midst of this cynical and vain world, there is for us at least one thing worth fighting for: Euripides. Especially if the agent's viewpoint (*apopsis*) is one of rejection and he is not a native Greek. Then Zeus Xenios grows angry and bursts forth. Out with the barbarians!
>
> ("Langhoff, the Annoying Foreigner" (in Greek), *He Kathemerine*, 27 August 1997)

A couple of years after the scandal, the theater scholars Savas Patsalidis and Elizabeth Sakellaridou summed up the reactions of critics and audiences

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19 Angelikopoulos (2002). I have translated the Greek word *daimonia* as "demons," but it also refers to the foreign directors' genius or acumen and to their potentially subversive ideas.

20 See Van Steen (2000) 165–167.

21 For more information on the case for modern Greek exceptionalism made by Koun and many of his disciples, and on the artistic and ideological consequences, see Van Steen (2000) 161–178.

22 For a comprehensive analysis of Greece's revival of ancient drama as an investment in the nation's symbolic capital see Roilou (2009).

and articulated different nuances of the widespread argument in defense of the Greek tradition, namely that Langhoff's production represented a new form of Western imperialist usurpation of indigenous Greek material:

> The problem with the reception of his reading was that the Greek audiences and critics did not see his work as a form of fair appropriation but rather as expropriation and exploitation, as an example of an arrogant "neo-imperialism" hastily disguised as an aesthetic pursuit; a parasitical activity and a contradiction of the play's plot, aesthetics and ethos. What mattered most to local critics was not the fact that Langhoff used the text of Euripides, but that he trivialized it, draining it of its source culture through an arbitrary, ill-informed, non-negotiated, and essentially one-sided mode of transportation.
>
> … [T]hey feel that a totally open and unprotected national text is in danger of being expropriated by a stronger "imperial text," and particularly by the globalizing mechanisms and complexities of the market.
>
> (Patsalidis and Sakellaridou (1999) 16, 17)

Conclusion: Unsettling Theater Rites

The modern Greek reception of Euripides' *Bacchae* saw, after too rational a start, an outburst of activity in recent decades that bodes well for the future of the play as a true performance experience, that is, with full attention paid to the complexities of *opsis*. From its somewhat subdued or repressed beginnings, the pendulum of the tragedy's reception swung in the opposite direction, with irrationality commodified, advertised, and exploited on stage through various visual means. The visual aspects of performance proved to be a path to innovation, especially for a play as rich in colorful detail as the *Bacchae*. But Greek society of the late 1990s was not quite prepared for the brisk dips into ugly social and psychological realities that Langhoff's production brought. With the modern, bloodied city of Thebes as the basis for all that pertained to *opsis*, the foreign director opened up an unsettling initiation rite into the social tragedy of the small-town Greek family. Unfortunately, the reviews of Langhoff's production and, more specifically, the outcry about its "excesses" side-tracked the debate on the postmodern movement in reviving ancient drama and on its alleged crisis. There is certainly no need for more scandal in the modern Greek theater world, but there is every bit of a need for a continuing quest for creative stage solutions, especially for those dimensions of *opsis* that make the performance experience happen again, outdoors, and for audiences of the twenty-first century.

FROM SCULPTURE TO VASE-PAINTING: ARCHAEOLOGICAL MODELS FOR THE ACTOR

Fiona Macintosh

During an interview for France's leading theatre journal *Revue d'Art Dramatique* in 1888, the acclaimed tragedian of the Comédie Francaise, Jean Mounet-Sully, invited the theatre critic into his studio to show him the "tools" of his trade. Next to a sketch for his Oedipus costume, which he had designed himself for himself, was a tragic mask, which Mounet-Sully had made and which acted as inspiration for his own (unmasked) performances of Oedipus. During the interview Mounet-Sully also referred to the studies he had made in museums and libraries of sculptures and vase paintings, which informed the movement patterns and "*gestes*" which he adopted for his performances in classical roles.[1]

His female counterpart was Sarah Bernhardt, who had been the leading lady at the Comédie Francaise until 1880, when she became actor-manager at the Théâtre de la Renaissance and later the Théâtre-Sarah-Bernhardt. Bernhardt shared both Mounet-Sully's talent and his interest in the visual arts. During a notable Comédie Française tour to London in the summer of 1879,[2] Bernhardt not only overwhelmed the London audiences with her theatrical powers, she also caused a considerable stir in the art world. Some four hundred guests (including those well-known patrons of any Hellenic revival event, the former Liberal Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone and the Royal Academician Frederick Lord Leighton) turned up to the opening of an exhibition of her sculptures and paintings at a fashionable Piccadilly art gallery (see *fig. 1*). For Bernhardt, as for Mounet-Sully, her work as a sculptress was parallel to and interdependent with her career in the theatre.[3] When the leading French theatre critic of the nineteenth century, Francisque Sarcey, commented upon her performance as Phèdre in 1893, he detected "an artistic beauty that made one quiver with admiration, the look of a fine statue."[4]

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[1] Vernay 1888.

[2] The tour was documented by many, including Arnold 1879, whose review included a call for the establishment of a British National Theatre.

[3] G. Marshall 1998.

[4] Cited in Stokes, Booth and Bassnett (1988) 155.

Figure 1. Sarah Bernhardt, the sculptress, in her studio in Paris c. 1880s.

What is significant here is that these two outstanding French actors from the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries were both sculptors and were both understood to "self-sculpt" as they performed on the stage. Their performances were intrinsically sculptural and had no need (we infer) of a Pygmalion to mould them—they were themselves, the creators/sculptors of their own performances. In this sense, they represent the culmination and the end of a long tradition in European theatre history, in which the theatrical ideal was classical and essentially sculptural.

It wasn't until the Wagnerian concept of the *Gesamtkuntswerk* was adopted and applied beyond the operatic realm at the very end of the twentieth century that the shortcomings of the sculptural ideal were fully overcome. Then the ideal of the fixity of the individual statuesque performer was replaced by a new interest in the kinetic movement of the group. The performer is no longer the statue; in Meyerhold's designation, the performer is now a hieroglyph:

> *Only via the sports arena can we approach the theatrical arena.*
>
> Every movement is a hieroglyph with its own peculiar meaning. The theatre should only employ those movements which are immediately decipherable; everything else is superfluous.[5]

Significantly when the publicity appeared for the Eva Palmer-Sikelianou production of *Prometheus Bound* in Delphi in 1927, the performers were photographed in poses strikingly reminiscent of the letters of the Greek alphabet. Now the indoor, proscenium theatre space gave way to outdoor performance spaces where the circle (as opposed to the picture frame) provided the dominant focus.[6] The archaeological model had to change: sculpture is no longer the model; it is vase-painting or the architectural frieze that provides the reference point for the modernist performer/director/choreographer.

I. *The Sculptural Ideal*

The sculptural ideal in the modern theatre can be traced back, at least, to Winckelmann's privileging of sculpture in ancient art in his *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (1764). It became common currency in the literary

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[5] "The Actor of the Future and Biomechanics" a report of Meyerhold's lecture in the Little Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire, 12 June 1922 in *Teatralnaya Moskva*, Moscow 1922, no. 45, pages 9–10 reprinted in Braun (1969) 200. Original *emphasis*.

[6] See Van Steen 2002 on the importance of the *orchestra* to Palmer.

sphere through A.W. Schlegel's lectures in Vienna from 1807, *Über dramatische Kunst und Literatur*, and was widely disseminated through the translation, reprinting and plagiarism of Schlegel's lectures throughout the nineteenth century in Europe. If sculpture, according to Winckelmann, was the supreme ancient art form and the condition to which all other arts aspired to a greater or lesser extent, the most sculptural art form, according to Schlegel, was tragedy. In practical and popular terms, as we have seen, this formulation was readily translated into a "sculptural" style of tragic acting, in which the tragedian assumed set "attitudes" which were copiously learned from well-known (mostly Graeco-Roman copies) of statues on display in museums. Just as Quintilian had advised Roman orators to model their stance upon statuary, so now we find that late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century handbooks for actors (such as William Cooke's *The Elements of Drama Criticism*, 1775) and even playwrights (notably Goethe) recommend the study of ancient statues in order to achieve (in Cooke's terms) that "grace, and give that *je ne sais quoi*, so much admired in the whole department of action."[7] The sculptural ideal involved a fixity of stance—an "attitude", a marmoreal appearance (actresses often whitewashed their arms to achieve this effect), and a use of cotton and/or muslin for the costumes (often dampened to enhance the folds).

This ancient classical-sculptural ideal, as it was perceived, was in reality a Romantic construct, but it remained largely unchallenged until the middle of the nineteenth century, when German philosophers, notably Schopenhauer and later Nietzsche, and the operatic practice of Richard Wagner offered theoretical and practical assault upon the ancient privileged art form. Schlegel had asserted the primacy of ancient sculpture over what he described as the modern privileging of a degenerate musical ideal. Schopenhauer's riposte was to demote the visual arts and sculpture, in particular, to the bottom of his aesthetic scale and to elevate music in turn to the top. Nietzsche moved the debate beyond a negative antithesis finding a new synthesis in Greek tragedy, in which the sculptural (now designated the Apolline, with its individuation, restraint and formal beauty) meets with and holds in check the life-enhancing/death-dealing Dionysiac music, with its collective, intoxicating, rapturous and murky depths.

What is significant here is how readily the archaeological and philosophical debate was translated into the theatre. Winckelmann's statues dominated

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7 Cooke (1775) 201. See Jenkins (1992) 20 for the meaning of "*je ne sais quoi*" as a *beau-idéaliste* catch-phrase to convey the particular beauty / grace found in, say, the Apollo Belvedere. On the sculptural ideal generally in the nineteenth century, see G. Marshall 1998.

the nineteenth-century European stage. We often find critics observing that Mounet-Sully's statuesque Oedipus carried an otherwise indifferent production: Isadora Duncan records in her memoirs that her most powerful memory as a spectator in the theatre was the night she saw Mounet-Sully (in what she describes as an otherwise uninspired 'Greek revival' production) in the part of Oedipus;[8] and for Lillah McCarthy, the actress who played Jocasta in the famous Reinhardt *Oedipus Rex* in Covent Garden in 1912, the Comédie Française production

> was cold, classical. Chorus: two women dressed in French classical style. No movement, the figures of the actors motionless, carved in marble. Nothing lived in it except Mounet-Sully, for whose superb acting no praise would be extravagant, but oh! for a Reinhardt to breathe into the other actors breath of life.[9]

In many ways these Winkelmann-esque statues were both a cause and a product of the nineteenth-century star-system in the theatre. This sculptural style was utterly dependent upon nineteenth-century stage pictorialism, against which theorists very often felt it was being defined (Schlegel, for example, finds modern music and the picturesque to be in contradistinction to the sculptural). This sculptural style also grew out of and was largely dependent upon the proscenium arch theatre, which in turn became fully established once the introduction of limelight from 1837 onwards enabled the actor to retreat behind the proscenium and still be fully seen by the audience. The sculptural style was also heavily dependent upon the archaeologically detailed sets of the proscenium arch stage. Even though Mounet-Sully had the verbal dexterity and the sheer physical presence to self-sculpt in theatrical spaces beyond the proscenium—in, for example, the newly excavated and reconstructed open-air Roman theatres in southern Europe—he often did this singlehandedly because the sculptural was in practice (as Lillah McCarthy's comment testifies) the exclusive preserve of the star-performer.

II. *Mounet-Sully's Forebears*

Before turning to Mounet-Sully's sculptural performances in some detail, it is important to trace the developments in the theatre that made his and Bernhardt's style possible. The French revolutionary ideals led in the 1870s to

8 Duncan (1928) 67–68.
9 McCarthy (1933) 302.

changes in fashion, which were adopted both on the street and on the stage. The "free" French citizen wore a tunic reminiscent of a Greek chiton and Greek-style sandals (slip-ons, with no heel, which were tied at the ankle with a sash/ribbon); and the newly liberated women, for whom public breast-feeding was to be celebrated as a natural Rousseau-esque act rather than a mark of primitivism, wore garments to reveal one breast, like the *Vénus à la coquille* (*Nymph with a Shell*) in the Louvre, and which Napoleon brought from Rome to Paris in 1807.[10] Voltaire had been instrumental in promoting increased historical accuracy in sets and costumes at the Comédie Française in the second half of the eighteenth century;[11] and the famous revolutionary tragic actor, Talma, caused a sensation when he brought the classical fashion from the streets into the theatre, appearing as a tribune in Voltaire's *Brutus* in 1789 in a toga that revealed his bare arms and legs. When transparent tunics and flesh-coloured (later, to avoid controversy, white) bodystockings were worn in ballet from 1800, similar shock-waves were sent through Parisian society.[12] The politicised sculptural ideal of the revolutionary period was fast accruing new titillating associations.

Emma Hamilton's "Attitudes", in which she assumed likeness to certain sculptural and painterly figures with little sartorial aid, are heavily dependent upon these social and theatrical experiments in France—and indeed upon developments in ballet in general towards the end of the eighteenth century, notably Marie Sallé's performance as a statue in *Pygmalion* at Covent Garden in 1734.[13] Hamilton had learned much from George Romney's studies of antiquities (she had been one of his models before her marriage); and her association with Greekness / the classical became absolute when she sat as the model for Joshua Reynolds' painting "A Bacchante" (1785), which her husband, Sir William Hamilton, had commissioned. But Emma Hamilton also learned much of the detail of her "Attitudes" from her husband's collection of Greek vases. With these "Attitudes", she brought, as Horace Walpole waggishly suggested, a "gallery of statues" to add to Hamilton's collection.[14] She performed these theatrical "Attitudes" to rapturous drawing-room audiences (which included, amongst many, an ecstatic Goethe on his Italian travels), and had an enormous influence on other 'sculptural' theatrical art forms later in the century.

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10 Chazin-Bennahim 2004.
11 Lough (1979) 73.
12 Chazin-Bennahim 2004.
13 On statues coming to life see Albright 2010; for an excellent account of Hamilton and ancient pantomime see Lada-Richards 2003.
14 Cited in Tours (1963) 90.

The more demotic sculptural art forms in nineteenth-century Britain (such as Mme Tussaud's wax models, which toured for thirty years before being housed at Baker Street in 1835) have been very ably discussed by Richard Altick and Michael Booth.[15] But it is important to mention the descendants of Hamilton's "Attitudes" in the *tableaux vivants* and *poses plastiques*, which proved to be a hugely popular (and often morally dubious) form of entertainment throughout the nineteenth century, in which well-known art works were recreated upon the stage. In the *tableaux vivants* at the Palace Variety Theatre in Shaftesbury Avenue, for example, women were scantily clad in body stockings in supposed imitation of some "classical" original until the early twentieth century. The dancer, Maud Allan, whose act included Greek-style performances, was hired to top the bill at the Variety in the early Edwardian period in order to improve the tone of the venue. But even her appearances, which regularly attracted such illustrious audience members as the Asquiths and Lady Constance Stewart Richardson, did not rid the venue entirely of its dubious past. And her unsuccessful libel case, which prompted her exit from public life, is not unrelated to her association in the public mind with these notorious *tableaux vivants*.[16] Less controversial but equally popular were the "Greek Statues" of Andrew Ducrow in the 1820s, performed at Astley's Theatre in London, in which Achilles, Ajax, the Discobolos and the Dying Gladiator all appeared on horseback to delighted audiences.[17]

The desire to view classical sculpture on the stage, as well as in museums at this time, was matched by an increasing appetite for archaeological accuracy in the sets. From 1831 onwards, the Olympic Theatre in London staged classical burlesques by J.R. Planché, who was shortly to become the leading founder of the British Archaeological Association and author of an authoritative *History of British Costume* (1854).[18] The Victorians followed the archaeological discoveries of the period with enormous interest. *The Illustrated London News*, which had reached a circulation of 140,000 copies per week by 1852, with at least three readers per copy, gave over large amounts of space to photographs and line drawings of archaeological sites. Victorian culture, as Richard Altick has aptly styled it, was essentially a viewing culture; and the theatre was the place where art and architecture came together on the stage.[19]

15 Altick 1978 and Booth 1981.
16 Macintosh 2010.
17 Saxon 1978.
18 Hall and Macintosh (2005) 341–347.
19 Altick 1978.

It is in the figure of the architect and set designer, Edward William Godwin, that the archaeological impulse is registered most acutely. For Godwin, the aim of the designer is to make the spectator witness the events onstage as if they were present at the original scene.[20] For his production of John Todhunter's play *Helena in Troas* in 1886 at Hengler's Circus in London, he reconstructed a Greek theatre (with its *orchestra*, *thymele* and *skēnē*) to enable the spectator to be transported to fifth-century Athens. With the chorus draped round columns in poses reminiscent of figures on the Parthenon Marbles, and with many members of the audience dressed in Greek-inspired gowns from Liberty's store, the audiences may well have felt thus "transported".[21]

In the accounts of the revivals of Greek plays in the 1880s, there is a sense in which the actress is being granted life and potency simply through the male spectator's gaze. In many ways, it was Bernhardt's challenge to this "Galatea aesthetic"[22] that made her performance (and indeed her life-style) so enthralling and unsettling to London audiences. Her predecessor at the Comédie Française, Rachel, who from 1835–1855 had been responsible for a revival of classical tragedy in France, had been regularly compared to a marble sculpture with her pale skin and perilously bony body. In England she was often deemed unnatural, too "statuesque". This was in marked contrast to the English star, Helen Faucit, another "statue", at whom De Quincey marvelled in an ecstatic review of her performance as Antigone in 1845 production of Sophocles' eponymous tragedy, with choral settings by Felix Mendelssohn: "the most faultless of Grecian marbles … What perfection of Athenian sculpture, the noble figure, the lovely arms of the fluent drapery! What an unveiling of the ideal statuesque."[23] But Helen Faucit was now a living statue and that was her appeal.

In some senses, this is a matter of the English "taste" differing from the Comédie Française house-style; but it is also about other moral matters. Faucit's private life was exemplary. In the case of Bernhardt, by contrast, she was not simply "self-sculptor" on the stage; she openly lived the life of the New Woman before the New Woman was to make her appearance on the

[20] Booth (1981) 21.
[21] Hall and Macintosh (2005) 485–489.
[22] The phrase is taken from G. Marshall 1998.
[23] De Quincey 1863 of her appearance in Edinburgh. Cf. *The Dublin Monitor* 22 Feb. 1845 of her appearance in Dublin, standing on the stage like a "statue fresh from the chisel of Phidias."

stage in the 1890s. Even those liberal Ibsenite critics, George Bernard Shaw and William Archer found Bernhardt's sculptural style hard to take—it is no more than "circus and the waxworks" for Shaw; and for Archer, Bernhardt is "no longer a real woman, but an exquisitely-contrived automaton, the most wonderful *article de Paris* ever invented, perfect in all its mechanical airs and graces, but devoid alike of genuine feeling and artistic conscience."[24] In the age of high naturalism, the sculptural ideal came to be seen as simply mechanistic.

III. *Mounet-Sully*

The sculptural ideal lived on, however, largely uncensored through the art of Mounet-Sully right until his death in 1916. One night the director of the Comédie Française claimed he could detect at least one hundred statues in Mounet-Sully's performance in *Oedipe Roi*.[25] Oedipus' growing anxiety in the pivotal scene with Jocasta was said to have been subtly conveyed by Mounet-Sully's absent gaze into the distance with his arm slightly raised (no doubt in direct imitation of some Graeco-Roman statue).[26]

He had been drawn to the theatre because it united all the arts: here was an art form which would engage and satisfy all his talents as a talented painter, sculptor, designer, pianist and singer. His work as sculptor and costume designer constituted a serious part of his preparation for a role. He attended a course given by the French archaeologist and Curator of Oriental Antiquities and ancient vases at the Louvre, Léon Heuzey, who published two books on Greek costume in 1893 and 1921 respectively.[27] What made Heuzey's classes especially notable was that each one ended with a practical session, when the students dressed live models with costumes.[28] According to Heuzey, Greek costume was "natural" for the human form—a widely held view at the time in England as well, where The Healthy and Artistic Dress Union was advocating dress reform, and especially the Greek style, in close association with the political emancipation of women. For Heuzey, the formlessness of Greek dress was its appeal: it depended literally on the human form and its movements for its shape; and once the human body had

[24] Cited in G. Marshall (1998) 149.
[25] Penesco (2000) 110.
[26] Cited in a review of the press in *Revue d'Art Dramatique* July–September (1888) 155.
[27] Heuzey 1983; Heuzey 1921.
[28] Penesco (2000) 95.

shaped it, the fabric obeyed human "*geste*", the undulations of human passions, as well as light and shade.[29]

In 1945 Jean Cocteau captures the way in which Mounet-Sully was able to translate Heuzey's theories into practice:

> … this tragedian didn't dress himself, he sculpted himself, he draped himself in such a way that the linen turned to marble and wrapped itself around his person most solemnly and definitively.[30]

Cocteau goes on to remark how during a performance of *Oedipe-Roi*

> … suddenly an arm emerged from behind a column. This arm brought with it a profile, similar to a shepherd's crook, to Minerva's helmet, to the horse at an angle on the pediment of the Acropolis. This profile sat on top of an astonishing breastplate, on a chest full of melodious roaring.[31]

What is striking here is Cocteau's vivid memory of an event of at least thirty years previously (Mounet-Sully's last performance was in 1915 at the Sorbonne). Cocteau recalls a bas-relief that only belatedly emerges as a three-dimensional shape as the actor comes out fully from behind the column. Cocteau's memory provides us with a clue to the durability of Mounet-Sully's acting style: as a consummate performer, he is able to adumbrate and indeed usher in the performance style of the next generation, where the frontal "sculptural" style gives way to a profile style, which is more reminiscent of the frieze or bas-relief.

It may well have been this profile (rather than frontal style) that enabled Mounet-Sully's performances to translate so well into the recently inaugurated open-air theatres of southern Europe. Mounet-Sully was understood to conquer the whole space in which he performed, even in the Roman theatre at Orange.[32] He conquered these outdoor spaces both with his stage presence and with his voice (he was from all accounts an accomplished baritone);

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[29] Cf. Ruskin in Cook's collection (2010) of his Oxford lectures on sculpture (274): "The folds of the Greek drapery … are, for the most part, used to express bodily form and motion."

[30] Cocteau (1945) 5: "… ce tragedien ne s'habillait pas, il se sculptait, il se drapait de telle sorte que la laine devenait du marbre et formait autour de sa personne des plis solonnels et définitifs."

[31] Cocteau (1945) 5: "soudain, un bras sortait d'une colonne, ce bras entraînait un profil, pareil à la houlette du berger, pareil au casque têtu de Minerve, au cheval de l'angle du fronton de l'Acropole. Ce profil se dressait sur l'étonnante cuirasse d'une poitrine pleine de rugissement melodieux." I am grateful to George W.M. Harrison for pointing out that the Louvre has some pieces of metopes and frieze from the Parthenon, including one horse, which fits Cocteau's description.

[32] Penesco (2000) 97.

Figure 2. Mounet Sully as Oedipus 1883 (= *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, November 5, 1883, 175).

and it was said that his vocal cadences would perfectly match his sweeping gestures (see *fig. 2*). His final appearance in the theatre was in *Oedipe Roi* in the Courtyard of the Sorbonne on 11 July 1915. After Oedipus had left the scene, one reviewer commented that he suddenly noticed that there were two statues left on the set, which no one had previously noticed.[33] Mounet-Sully had so dominated the space that even the setting had receded into the background. The sculptured actor—as so very rarely had happened in the nineteenth century—had exceptionally managed to transcend, rather than be contained by, the theatrical space in which he/she performed.

It may well have been his ability both to self-sculpt and to perform in profile that led to his ready and successful involvement with the twentieth-century's most popular and truly pioneering art form, cinema. It may be surprising that the actor who was renowned for his extraordinarily powerful voice was to have turned to silent film in the last phase of his life. But his dependence upon "*gestes*" would have made that transition a particularly appropriate one. As Pantelis Michelakis has shown, Mounet-Sully's silent film of *Oedipe Roi* of 1912, in which he performed and which he directed, was released not just in France but in USA (January 1913) and Austria (March 1913). What is important about the film is that it is clearly not a record of a stage performance, but an attempt to retell the Oedipus story "in a manner appropriate to the generic parameters of the new art form."[34] Mounet-Sully's versatility at this moment of great technological and performative change enabled him to adapt and his style to endure.

IV. *The Choral Frieze*

It is not fortuitous that the academic interest in ancient Greek vases coincided with the rise of silent film. The French musicologist Maurice Emmanuel published his ideas on ancient Greek dance, *La Danse grecque antique d'après les monuments figurés*, in 1886, the same year that the first cinematic exhibition with a projector took place in Paris.[35] Emmanuel looked at ancient images in the way he looked at modern photographs and attempts to reconstruct classical Greek dance from vase paintings and sculptures. As Frederick Naerebout has explained:

33 Penesco (2000) 90.
34 Michelakis, forthcoming.
35 Naerebout 2010.

> Speculating on *the decisive moment* captured by the artist, one could also speculate on the previous and subsequent moments in time. Chronophotography and early cinema did the rest. Why shouldn't the artists have captured several moments from a single movement? One only had to put those images in sequence, in a zoötrope … for the movement to come back to life … [Emmanuel] came up with the idea that the Greek vase-painters were chronophotographers *avant la lettre*.[36]

Even if Emmanuel's overdependence on the modern analogue of the film reel led him to assume mistakenly that ancient dance could be reconstructed from ancient images, what is important here is that he is part of the new movement which gave new prominence to ancient vases.

In 1899 Laflotte compared contemporary actors from the Comédie Française with figures on fifth-century Athenian vases to prove their dependence on vase-painting models (see *fig. 3*).[37] The juxtaposition is not only made possible because of the new fascination with the hitherto neglected Greek art form; it also serves to demonstrate that Mounet-Sully was offering his audiences a rhetorical performance that was, in essence, "sculpturally"-informed, albeit one that regularly consisted (as Cocteau recalls) of strikingly profile (rather that frontal) acting styles.[38]

In 1900 Furtwängler highlighted the importance of shape, pattern and design in signed vases; by 1908 John Beazley had published his first article, in which he drew attention to the importance of the hitherto disregarded unsigned vases.[39] It is no doubt also significant at this time, as Ian Jenkins has pointed out, that with the rise of modernism, there is a decline in the interest in classical sculpture amongst art teachers.[40]

In the theatre too we find a turning away from the sculptural paradigm and a concomitant movement towards the frieze as the dominant metaphor. When the Russian theatre director Meyerhold writes about "stylized theatre" in 1907 during his experiments with alternatives to the theatrical naturalism of his master, Stanislavski at the Moscow Art Theatre, he writes: "The stylized theatre liberates the actor from all scenery, creating a three-dimensional

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36 Naerebout (2000) 47–48.

37 Laflotte 1899. See Valakas 2002, who points out that the Comédie Française style is intrinsically neo-Aristotelian, and decidedly "un-Greek", with rhetorical uses of the body matching stylised speech.

38 It is notable that Mounet-Sully is almost always presented in profile—except in the final scene of *Oedipe Roi*, where the mask-like quality of his facial expression is being highlighted.

39 On the academic "discovery" of the ancient vase see Smith 2010.

40 Jenkins 1992.

Figure 3. Mounet Sully and Sarah Bernhardt's gestes
compared to Athenian vase-paintings by Laflotte (1899).

art in which he can employ natural, sculptural plasticity."[41] Mounet-Sully's outdoor performances, and especially his one at the Sorbonne mentioned above, may well stand as a living testament to Meyerhold's "natural, sculptural plasticity."

However, finding new spaces generally led to a realisation that new patterns of movement needed to be sought. Indeed Meyerhold himself discovered in his own productions that if the performer and the set moved closer to the audience, the actors move as if in bas-relief. Whereas in Mounet-Sully's classical/sculptural ideal, the body was merely a means of conveying the cerebral and the emotional qualities of the protagonist, now for the modernist directors, the sheer physical presence of all the actors (not just the protagonist) was to become a central part of the performance.

Wagner may well have decried the "awful solitude of one man carved out of stone" and advocated "a countless multitude of real living people" in his music-theatre;[42] but he had in reality no desire to include the ancient chorus in his highly hierarchical version of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, which dispenses with the chorus altogether and substitutes the modern orchestra, thereby making music the dominant element.[43] It was only once the Austrian theatre director, Max Reinhardt had experimented with vast crowds of extras in his productions, and only once the pioneers of what is now called "Modern Dance" (notably Isadora Duncan) and the Ballets Russes had been seen across Europe, that the true limits of the sculptural metaphor were understood.

Duncan's bare-footed, tunic-clad dance performances caused a sensation in high cultural circles at the beginning of the twentieth century, just as Emma Hamilton's "Attitudes" had done over a hundred years previously. Like Hamilton, Duncan took her inspiration from ancient sculpture and vase-paintings; but now it was the movement, not the performer's fixity, that thrilled. For Nijinsky, the star of the Ballets Russes, Duncan "dared to put liberty to movement; she has opened the door of the cell to the prisoners."[44] Critics often commented that it was as if she had literally danced off a Greek vase. And under the tutelage of Diaghilev, the Ballets Russes sought to convey this liberating movement and to attain the Wagnerian ideal of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* (which they maintained the opera had patently failed to achieve) within ballet. In May 1909, Diaghilev brought the Ballets Russes to

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41 Cited in Braun (1969) 62.
42 Meyerhold on Wagner cited in Braun (1969) 88.
43 Cf. Silk 1998.
44 Nijinsky cited in Kurth (2001) 248.

Paris and the Russian season was revelatory. Never before had audiences seen such bright and lavish costumes; never before had dancers danced with such energy and physicality; and Nijinsky, then the lover of Diaghilev, was the company's embodiment of raw energy and power.

When Nijinsky performed the première of his ballet *L'Apres Midi d'un faune* in Paris in May 1912, to Debussy's score, it was danced against a backdrop of Greek-style friezes designed by Léon Bakst. His barefoot chorus of nymphs broke with all classical balletic convention as they danced in profile, as if they had danced off a Greek vase, along a narrow path at the front of the stage. And Nijinsky himself, clad only in a leotard and sandals, similarly broke absolutely with the sculptural ideal, as he too danced in profile and shocked Paris high society with a simulated orgasm in the final few moments of the ballet. When *The Times*' critic comments that the Ballet Russes' London première in 1911 had resulted in "many idols" being "tumbled from their pedestals", his metaphor, as we have seen, is curiously apt.[45]

Some fifteen years later in Greece, at the two Delphic Festivals in 1927 and 1930, we find the Duncan-inspired choreography of Eva Palmer-Sikelianou owing perhaps at least an equal debt to Nijinsky's example. Like her predecessors, from Hamilton to Mounet-Sully, Palmer drew inspiration from serious research (in her case in the Athens Archaeological Museum) for her choreography of the chorus of *Prometheus Bound*. Palmer criticised Duncan for playing frontally to the audience instead of dancing (as the Ballets Russes had done) in profile.[46] Now in the ancient theatre at Delphi, the Romantic sculptural ideal of the proscenium theatre has of necessity been rejected absolutely; in its stead, it is the two-dimensional red-figure vase-paintings that are found to be the perfect archaeological model for performance in the circular orchestra.

In his Third Lecture, Schlegel had linked the frieze with the earlier (and we infer more primitive) Homeric art form, with its non-teleological structure and paratactic style, which affords only a snapshot view rather than the "whole" event.[47] Now this "primitive" art form is rediscovered at a time when photography is in its early stages and the development of chronophotography is leading to a new understanding of natural patterns of movement in nature. Modernist theatre practitioners readily adopt this "primitive" style; and it lies behind the innovative movement patterns of the Ballets Russes and the

45 *The Times*, 5 Aug. 1911, p. 9.
46 Van Steen 2002.
47 Schlegel 1809.

productions of those who seek to reintroduce dance into the modern theatre. In the Nietzschean equation, music has now found its place along side the Apolline spoken word, as a dancing chorus—strikingly reminiscent of figures on Attic red-figure vase-paintings—participates fully in the tragic action.

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